THE WITNESS OF THE WILDERNESS

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G. ROBINSON LEES

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THE
WITNESS OF THE WILDERNESS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

VILLAGE LIFE IN PALESTINE:

A DESCRIPTION OF THE RELIGION, HOME LIFE, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, CHARACTERISTICS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF THE PEASANTS OF THE HOLY LAND, WITH REFERENCE TO THE BIBLE.

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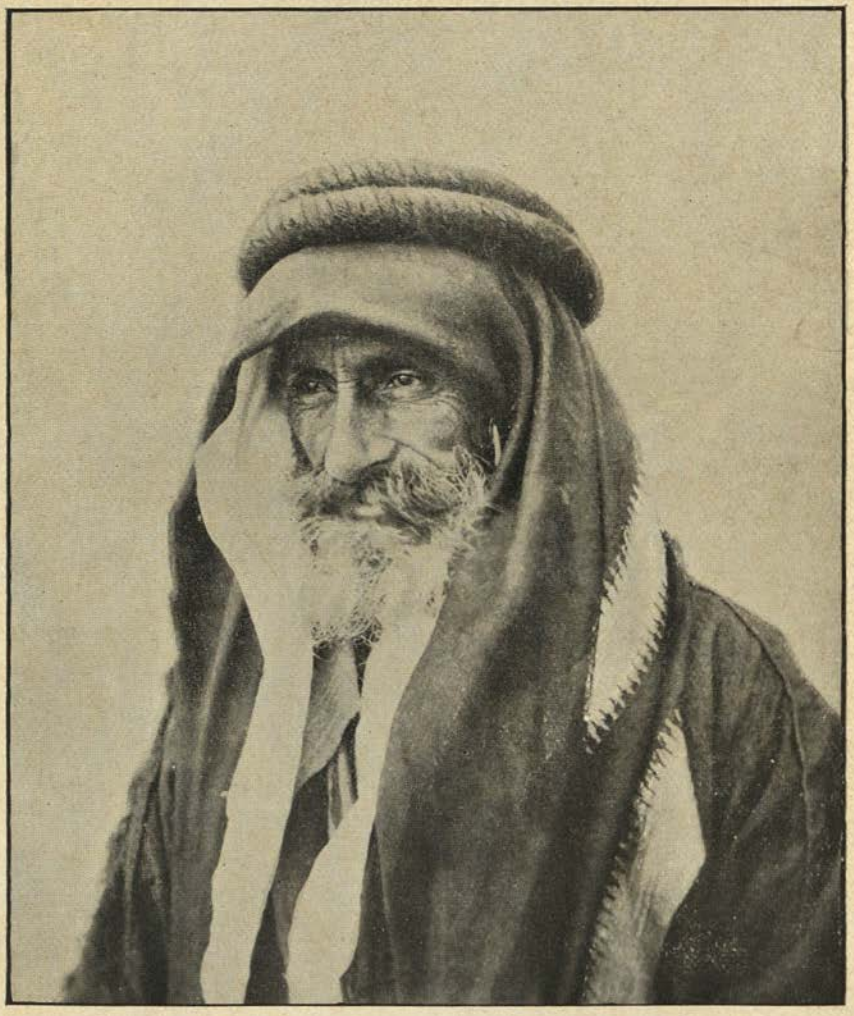

A BEDAWY.

THE WITNESS OF THE WILDERNESS

THE BEDAWIN OF THE DESERT

THEIR ORIGIN, HISTORY, HOME LIFE, STRIFE, RELIGION, AND SUPERSTITIONS, IN THEIR RELATION TO THE BIBLE

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF "VILLAGE LIFE IN PALESTINE," "LIFE AND ADVENTURE BEYOND JORDAN," ETC.

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WITH TWENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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PREFACE.

THE Bedawin of the desert occupy a unique position in the history of the human race, one that has not generally received the consideration it merits. It is the "Witness of the Wilderness" which furnishes us with illustrations of those darker pages of the Israelitish story that prevented the line of Promise from appearing clearly and distinctly in the Chosen Race. In the Children of Israel there is represented the progressive revelation of God; in the Children of the Wilderness we see the state of life in which it first appeared. That life has been stationary in the Bedawin, and I have endeavoured to depict its salient features in their association with the Land of Promise and its People, and the normal condition of its existence.

Recent events in the Turkish Empire, the grant of a new Parliamentary Constitution, and the construction of the desert railway from Damascus to Medina and Mecca, are factors of supreme interest and importance in the wilderness life, which may bring the Bedawin and their country, the cradle of Islam, more prominently before the notice of the Christian world, and it seems to me that this is an opportune time for desiring to attract the attention of those who might wish to know what they imply to the manners and customs of the nomad race and the relation they bear to the Scriptures.

My residence for six years in Palestine and my intercourse with the Bedawin in their "houses of hair" furnished me with the means of obtaining information. In order that it might be more complete I have consulted Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, Jennings-Bramley's account of the "Bedouin of the Sinaitic Peninsula" in the *Palestine Exploration Fund's Quarterly Statements*, Conder's *Heth and Moab*, and Schumacher's *Across the Jordan*.

Only eight of the illustrations are from my

own negatives. I am indebted for the rest, chiefly to my old friend and travelling companion, Mr. C. A. Hornstein of Jerusalem (and also for other valuable help), to Dr. Johnson of the Land of Moab, and the Rev. A. Forder of Jerusalem.

G. ROBINSON LEES.

St. Andrew's Vicarage,
Lambeth, S.E.

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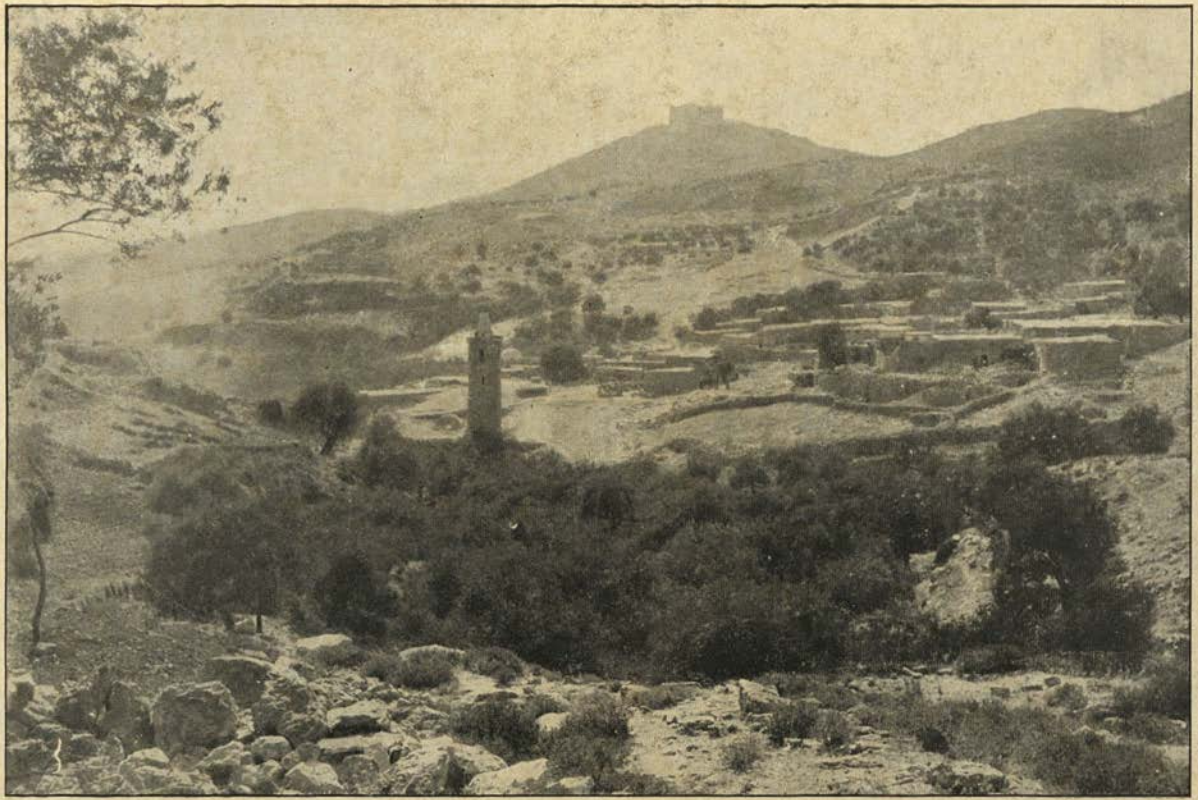
CHAPTER I.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WILDERNESS.

THE Land of Canaan, modern Palestine, was promised to Abraham and conquered by his descendants. They believed the promises of God for people and country. They accepted His word, and kept His commandments, except when through the weakness of their mortal nature, and forgetful of their high destiny, they succumbed to the allurements of the world around them. The dawn of their history arose in the wilderness, on their march to Canaan, when the people were under the guidance of the leader who marshalled their host and prepared their minds for the occupation of their settled home. The training they received was not calculated to make them like other people permanently residing in a country, but it fitted them for a unique place amongst the nations of the earth; and at this remote period it is possible to look back and see all the more clearly that position, in its relation to the rest of mankind whose history was contemporary or subsequent to that of the children of Israel. They have left no great school of architecture for man to follow, no remains of ancient Jewish structures survive; they have not left wonderful examples of art, nor a system of philosophy as the Greeks, nor a marvellous scheme of government

as the Romans; there has been nothing of this kind left by the Jewish people, but it was a race which conveyed the inner mind of God to man, through whom His revelations were made in the successive stages of their history, to witness for the truth, and tell man about God. It is this feature which distinguishes them from others, and lends additional interest to their story.

Their nation was cradled in the Land of Promise, and ruled by the seed of the child of promise, in accordance with the laws which had been revealed in the same luminous manner which directed the course of history of God's people. The belief in God's favour established the Jewish Church, and kept its adherents separate from the world, in a way which is in strict accord with all the miraculous dealings, which have been recorded in the history of the past, and seen in the evidence of the present. This belief was handed to the Christian Church with all its consequences, and we may trace in Western Palestine the foundation of that Church, its history, and development. The children of Israel who resolved to settle on the east of the Jordan, on the border of the wilderness, were as valiant and as righteous as the tribes which made their homes on the west of the river, yet they had no part in the great achievements of the nation, the establishment of the kingdom, and foundation of the Church. The river Jordan has not only divided the land of Palestine, it has separated the people of the country. It is an ethical as well as a geographical boundary, and indicates, not by any arbitrary distinction, or fanciful interpretation, a corresponding relationship between the Old and New Testaments. On the east there is a land of natural beauty, of wooded hills, park-like glades, and picturesque valleys, richer



THE LAND OF GILEAD.

far than the country west of the Jordan, yet it never attained the degree of prosperity which was achieved by the less fruitful provinces bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The flood of barbarism which flowed at intervals from the wilderness, continually changed the face of the country, paralysing its resources, stifling all progress, and rendering inoperative the desire of permanent occupation. The rapidity of movement which the marauders possessed, the irresistible force of their superior numbers, and the difficulty of carrying on an aggressive campaign against them in the desert left them in the occupation of a situation that became a scourge to the country of the East. Throughout the history of Israel we find that when the faith of the nation grew dim and the people transgressed the law of God hosts from the wilderness overran the country until the nation returned to its allegiance. A striking illustration is furnished in the Book of Judges before God raised up Gideon to expel the enemy (Jud. vi. 1-10). This is but typical of the individual as well as the nation. When the spiritual life in man declines through neglect of communion with the source of Divine life, natural man, with the spirit of the wilderness with him, is the dominating influence until he turns again, and becomes strong enough to overcome the carnal desires of the flesh.

Abraham to whom the country was promised by the word of God had two sons, one born out of due time, a child of promise, through whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; the other a natural born son of the bondwoman who came from the wilderness, where nature asserts itself in wild abandon both of heart and will.

Progressive revelation followed the line of Isaac, ac-

cording to God's promise, and left the descendants of Ishmael behind, where they have remained, stationary, going down to their desert grave, unchanging and unsubdued, following that mode of life in the wilderness of the East prophesied and described in the Old Testament, typical of the natural man who lives without God; while the descendants of Isaac, the child of promise, in the fulfilment of prophecy, established the kingdom and founded the Church of God on the west of the Jordan as recorded in the New Testament.

We are authorised to regard Hagar and her son as figures, types, of the old life, and the covenant of the law, and all who are under the bondage of the law, and we find in them nature contrasted with grace, the flesh with the spirit, and thereby obtain the Divine idea of what the term flesh implies.

The two covenants are allegorised in the son of Hagar and the son of Sarah, in opposition to one another by the flesh warring against the spirit (Gal. iv. 22-24, v. 17-25). They are illustrated by the spirit of the wilderness, and the holy calling of God, and are also seen whenever any one is in a state of nature or of grace. The witness of the wilderness is the state of nature, unrestrained by the influence of Divine power, and is found on the east of the Jordan where the enemies of Israel were long in possession, and where the wild fierce spirit manifests itself in the undisciplined hordes of the Bedawin, the modern representatives of the warring nations whose spirit prevented the growth of the kingdom on their side of the river, and eventually obtained dominion over the whole land as we see it in the degradation of to-day.

The ceaseless ebb and flow of this human tide is

shown in the ruins which cover the Eastern land, and the fear that is apparent in all who dwell amidst the disquietude of the districts near the wilderness. Even in Jerusalem there is a wholesome dread of the Bedawin of the uplands of Moab and the wilderness beyond, and comparatively little is known of their manners and customs, because their most characteristic feature, a desire to take possession of everything which is not securely fastened to a stronger hand, is a perpetual menace to peace and safety. The warring times of the Old Testament record are illustrated by their wanton deeds, and the darker periods of Israelitish history portrayed by their wayward habits.

Through the significant illustration thus furnished by the historic river as a barrier which kept the distinction between the old ways marked by the fiercer elements of Old Testament history, and the new life which grew under the benign influence of Divine love, association has created in the minds of all who are interested in the country, a feeling of tenderness for that side of the river where the Messianic hope was fulfilled in the life and death of Jesus, the Christ, the corner-stone of the Church universal, whose early history is recorded in the New Testament; and a feeling of romantic interest developed and intensified by the mystery attached to the comparatively unknown region of the East, where old customs still survive through the wilderness spirit so strong and fearful in its enmity towards progress.

There was a time in the history of the country when the barrier was overcome, and the spirit of the wilderness in an aggravated form overwhelmed the whole of the West, and settled permanently like a blight upon the land. As at all times in the past, it appeared when

the enervating influence of the natural man had weakened his soul's life, and left the Church, the witness for God, in a condition of decay. The missionary zeal of the early Christians had extended the Church, planting it in other lands. It grew in Roman Arabia, old Bashan, and the Christian history of this province is perhaps more clear than in any part of the country, and will serve as an illustration of the rise and fall of the cause of truth in the hearts of the men who lived and moved in the Land of Promise. When first they received the truth the Christians in this province were scarcely tolerated, and more often persecuted; for the safety of their persons and security of their property they exhibited few signs of their religion that would attract the notice of the Roman government, until Constantine the emperor adopted the same faith. In these dark days their faith became strong, it flourished when it was sanctioned by the temporal power, and the Christians were able to practise their rites and ceremonies, not only openly, but with the ostentation of a new-born freedom. Crosses and other religious emblems were carved on different parts of their public buildings, and even on the lintel stones and door-posts of their houses. Inscriptions in very elementary Greek were extensively cut on stones, and placed in all new structures as votive offerings or memorials to those that were loved and had passed to their eternal rest. But the reality of their faith, tested and tried in the darkness of persecution, perished in the season of ease and safety that followed, and this decline appropriately represents the condition of the Church in Western Palestine. When the Mohammedan host, imbued with the spirit of the wilderness, swept like a whirlwind over the East, it was a repetition in greater force of

the invasion of the land of Israel by the Bedawin hordes, when its inhabitants signally failed in their allegiance to God in the time of the Judges. The whole of Bashan with its stone built towns and teeming population was devastated, the Moslem army marched through the Christian cities, and the whole of their inhabitants were either driven away, or perished in the defence of their homes, and since that time they have lain desolate, as empty as the wilderness around them. The solemn stillness of well-paved streets, and well-built dwellings, is eloquent in its sadness of the glory of departed days.

The blight of Mohammedan power, the fierce spirit of the wilderness, settled on the west of the Jordan; where though the Church was weakened through serious losses, it survived in the land of its birth; it still lives, a feeble witness of everlasting truth and righteousness, and continues to bear its testimony despite the powers of evil arrayed against it.

Long years have passed since the torrent of their wild rush from the desert swept over the face of the country and settled on it like a vitreous mass through which it is possible to see the life of olden days, most clearly where the sacred record of God's people was more firmly marked, in the districts most remote from the towns. The invaders settled chiefly in the cities. Conquest meant to them the power of sharing the wealth they had not created, but for which they had fought, and won at the point of the sword. They were glad to leave things as they found them, to allow the peasants that were intimately connected with the soil to continue to till it, as former conquerors had done, providing for the same share of the produce, which is still

collected in the same way. They retained all those who were able to minister to their wants, the workers in the town as well as the farmers in the country. But this reward was not the only object of their invasion. As soldiers, filled with the spirit of strife and imbued with a mission, they considered the proclamation of their creed as necessary as the gathering of the spoils of war; and with the same impetuous zeal which had distinguished their march into the country they compelled, by the force of the spirit within them, all who were not in strict communion with the Jewish and Christian sects of the towns to adopt the faith of the new Prophet. It is an intolerant creed, establishing over heart and mind a hostile influence, the fierce and warlike spirit of the wilderness, stronger than of old by virtue of a fanaticism which has sprung from the power possessed by an evil nature that hates the good. It is undoubtedly a malevolent power begotten in the desert, eminently suitable to the race that has so long defied all efforts to bring it under subjection. It is the enemy of progress, and the instigator of strife. The influence it has long exercised in the country, where it settled, has had a baneful effect on the Christian Church that remained, in spite of all attempts to destroy it by the systematic ill treatment of its members. The abiding nature of that Church, even in its poverty of truth, and the paucity of its numbers, is a standing witness of the power of God in a land where the way of life is evil. The crossing of the barrier which separated the old from the new, and the bringing in of the old life where the new should have prevailed, have not totally eradicated the signs of its existence, and the marks of the life made by its Founder.

THE RIVER JORDAN.

As the traveller slowly pursues his way along the route by which he makes the acquaintance of the sites and scenes of the life that has left its traces on hill and plain, he is occupied almost at every step with the record of the past in the living present. Everywhere is seen evidence of Scripture truth, and the Bible student is able to appreciate its illuminating power expressed in the sweeping landscape, dotted by the remains of historic activity, and the signs of the enduring customs of the immovable East.

Whether he wanders over Galilean hills, sprinkled with the varied hues of many flowers, or rides down the western declivity of those hills to the placid water beneath his feet, he will be accompanied by thoughts which bridge the flight of time, and carry him back again to those days when these scenes were closely identified with the life of Jesus. There is a holy charm about them which embraces the heart and invigorates the will. The weird grandeur of the eastern shore of the lake, the rugged crags above the rounded stones, chafed by the incessant ripple of the little waves, the silver strand of the bays on the northern shore, where oleanders fringe the beach and dip their crimson blossoms in the water, and the swelling billows in the centre of the lake, all serve as reminders of the days when the Son of Man taught His wondrous lessons to the people who lived beside the sea. The hearers of His word have passed away, their habitations lie in deserted heaps, but the words of life are left to plant the righteousness of God in the soul of man, and elevate his mind with their eternal truth.

The south of the land, towards whose city He steadfastly set His face, brings even more tender memories,

because in the city of Jerusalem that life was offered for sinful men.

A life for a life is still the creed of the people east of the Jordan, the earliest law of the Old Testament, before the Messianic hope was made manifest in its pages, and grew into the ideas of the people: and in contradistinction to this in the highest and noblest sense the Life for the life is the creed of the people of the New Testament. In the former it was taken, in the latter it was given. In these two words we have the fundamental principles of the old, and the new, the spirit of the wilderness, and the spirit of the Christ. The old life in man, and the new life in God. Take is the natural instinct of man in the present, the spirit of the Bedawin representing the men of the past. Give is the desire of the regenerate heart, and the forcible illustration of the new life. The manners and customs of the Bedawin, based on the primitive laws of the past given to the old man, show how necessary and appropriate was the great sacrifice of Christ for the final consummation of God's law for the new man.

Beyond Jordan is the wilderness home of the people who live the old life in its native savagery. The traveller in that country realises there is an element of danger which excites his feelings, and introduces a piquancy into his journey seldom found in modern travel. It is a new exercise for the emotions, differing altogether from the comfortable thoughts that refreshed his spirit as he followed the footsteps of Jesus in the Holy Land. Constant vigilance has to be exercised to prevent disaster, and frustrate the attempts of a people who will not hesitate to take by force what they cannot obtain by fraud. Here the enemies of Israel, in a land

THE JORDAN VALLEY—ITS EXTREME WIDTH.

notorious for passion, kept watch on the border for any opportunity to raid their homes; the fierce elements of human nature still carry on their raids; the watchman stands in his customary attitude of expectancy for the weakening of the arm of authority.

There is nothing else to see than what their devastating hand has left in ruined heaps, or settlers filled with the dread of their appearing; nothing relating to the better spirit and nobler life once established on the West of the river. Well may the Israelites of old have longed to cross the desert, and leave the wilderness life behind them in the passage of the Jordan into the Land of Promise, and the future glory of a settled home.

CHAPTER II.

THE PEOPLE OF THE WILDERNESS.

1. THEIR ORIGIN.

IN the beginning of the Word of God a distinction is shown between a godly and a wicked seed,[1] and a mark is reached, at which the habit of worship commenced, and certain men stand out, even in those early ages, as living in the consciousness of a Divine Presence.[2] The wicked prospered, their numbers increased, and for a time violence and corruption were triumphant. The tendencies of man when unrestrained by law and unassisted by grace[3] prevailed in the land, till the earth was visited by a signal judgment,[4] the foreshadowing of every succeeding one, and the final Divine judgment upon sin.

These few narratives do not enable us to understand the extent and mode of primeval revelation, or why it

[1] Gen. iv. 4, 5, 7: "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering: But unto Cain he had not respect . . . "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

[2] Gen. iv. 26: "then men began to call on the name of the Lord"; Gen. vi. 9: "And Noah walked with God".

[3] Gen. vi. 5: "the imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually".

[4] Gen. vi. 13: "the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth".

was that before and after the flood darkness prevailed over the light. But we are led to see more clearly the distinction between them as time passes, and the various inhabitants of the earth follow the way of their own desires, animated by the spirit which moves their inclination towards good or evil. Evidence is furnished of the disposition of mankind, when the call of Abraham shows the working of Divine power in the human heart, and the condition of the natural man is revealed in the ways of the people who fail to perceive the will of God. The wilderness life is life without regard for good, opposed at all times to righteousness, hostile to progress, and inimical to truth. It has remained the same throughout all time, withstanding all attempts to change it. While the resources of civilisation have grown concurrently with the development of religious faith, the desert-tribes of the Orient, the people of the wilderness, have been left in that state of primitive simplicity which we find recorded in the earliest narratives of the Old Testament, where the disposition of man's heart is inclined towards evil continually. The great distinction between the two sons of Abraham as prophesied in the Bible is all the more remarkable, because of the evidence available of its fulfilment. The revelation of God's will through the line of Isaac is sufficiently clear for all, who have read the account of the race in His word, and have received the blessings which were foretold would spring from it, to accept without hesitation its historical accuracy. But it is less easy to understand how it is that the descendants of Ishmael should still be following the same manner of life as their forefathers, and why they appear in all ages to have been excluded from participating in the benefits derived from the pro-

gress of revelation. The prophecy relating to Ishmael and his descendants seems thus to have been of the nature of an arbitrary distinction, with a sustaining force that kept his race always apart. But this is more apparent than real. While the Word of God represented their future, it did not compel them to adhere to their mode of life in order that it might prove to be true. They were free to accept, or reject, His witness; that they refused His testimony and followed their own devices, is an exhibition of the wilfulness of man, and not a mark of God's unfavourable appointment of his destiny.

It is unnecessary, and it would be inappropriate, to discuss the doctrine of election, but it might be well to observe that the elect people of God, through whom the revelation of His will was made in the line of Isaac, were a standing witness of His being, His power, His control and His guidance. Their belief in Him carried with it the idea of harmony between God and His people, quite different from anything found amongst other nations. The best of the people were the most representative of this truth, and other nations were conscious of the testimony which they bore of His Presence, although they believed Him to be but the God of the nation, the God of Israel, more powerful perhaps than their tribal Gods, yet one amongst many (Gen. xxi. 22, 23; Ruth i. 16; 1 Sam. iv. 7, 8; 2 Kings xix. 10, 11, 12; Dan vi. 20, 26). Moreover when the witness for God was most sure, it was most impressive; and there was an acknowledgment of its power, and a response to its truth—the most notable instances being Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite (Judges v. 24) and Ruth the Moabitess (Ruth i. 16)—which shows that

while God specially called a people for His purpose, others might be enabled to respond to the declaration of His witnesses, and become partakers of His blessing.

The influence of the law of God was often felt without that law becoming more than a rule, or custom, and not an integral part of the life. And thus we find today among the people of the wilderness, some of the old laws of the Old Testament, more especially in the elementary form which nature observes without reference to a law-giver, but in reality they are God's provision for the natural man. Other reminders of the existence of God's people, who lived in close proximity to the wilderness, are noticeable in the inhabitants. All laws relating to blood as the life are in force, the old code of retaliation still exists, and in that literal form presented to all Bible students in the earlier part of the Old Testament history.

The natural features of the country, the inexhaustible magic of perfect freedom which forms the ideal of the nomadic instinct in man, the desire to live apart from towns, and the straitened circumstances which attend the restless footsteps of civilisation, have contributed their share in causing the people to retain for so long a time the characteristics of the men of old. There is however, another and a stronger reason, intimately connected with the rest, to which I have already alluded, the predominance of man's natural inclination, the desire to live without Divine control, the way of the flesh that knows no law but its own waywardness,—"the wild man". It is written of Ishmael (Gen. xvi. 12), "he will be a wild man; his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him". It is an indisputable fact that this prediction concerning Ishmael has been fulfilled,

both in its spiritual significance, and its literal sense, that in no period of history it has been untrue of his descendants. The people of the wilderness, the Bedawin of the desert, which stretches in endless waves of restless sand, as the tide of the solemn sea, from Eastern Palestine to the Euphrates valley, and the arid wastes of Arabia, are wild men in the sense implied in the Scripture text. Many of their names are quite unlike the Moslem names of the townspeople of the Holy Land, but such as express the qualities most admired by a turbulent race, reminding us of the princes Oreb and Zeeb (Judges vii. 25). One great tribe of the East is called the *Beni-Sakhr*, "the Sons of the Rock"; another the *Nimr*, *i.e.*, "the leopard"; and children's names are frequently *Fahed* or *Fahd*, "the lynx," *Dhib*, "the wolf," and *Adu*, "the foe".

It is well known that people who have been living remote from trade centres, content to dwell in isolation, satisfied with their condition, have not been moved by ambitious schemes of aggrandisement which the intercourse of nations has encouraged. It is a matter of history that commercial relationships have always provoked a rivalry which has introduced a change of living, and provoked a spirit of emulation. The desire for wealth has been the most potent factor in the growth of civilisation, apart from the inspiring influence of religion. And where the rise and fall of nations have been recorded, at the same time the enervating power which affects mankind has been traced, and, speaking generally, it followed the luxury produced by excessive wealth. The simple life is the most enduring feature of natural, and national existence. It has been practised for ages by the Bedawin, and their forefathers.

There is a significance in the casting away of Hagar and Ishmael, in the signal preservation of the life of this son of Abraham, in a land that formed the cradle of his race (Gen. xxi. 19, 20, "And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer"). It shows that man will always be furnished with the necessaries of life wherever his lot may be cast. The natural instinct of self-preservation finds an appropriate response in all places, in the wonderful economy of nature, whether it is required for self-support, or self-defence, and the elemental characteristics of the human heart are there most forcibly displayed. Whatever may be said of the nature of sin the primal disposition of man is lawless, his first principle is self, and there arises from the nature of the case a desire to place some restraint on the actions of his neighbours for the protection of his own property.

There is a dim consciousness within him of certain rights, of things belonging to himself, which he desires to preserve for his own use and benefit. From the same cause, there arises from the sense of his own rights, a perception of the existence of rights in others, which ought to be respected, but in its most elementary form it is might that is right, and the stronger hand which maintains its cause. A more exact idea of the rights of others, and a better conception of the claims of morality, depend upon the general advance of human society. The growth is slow where the poverty of his surroundings rarely excites the desire of the individual. No progress has been made in the wilderness, where the

necessity for restraint is not sufficiently apparent to cause the adoption of a system of government for the maintenance of the rights of the people.

Patriarchal rule at its best is not stronger than the influence of the head of the family or chief of the tribe, and that will depend on the prestige he has obtained, and the respect in which he is held by the people under his immediate control, and the moral standard of the people themselves. The true standard of the moral altitude of a nation, or of a stage of history, is the conduct which remains uncensured, because it corresponds to the moral conscience of the people, or time, in question. Conscience is not a faculty which by its own inherent powers of intuition determines all the cases presented to it. It is rather like a judge, who decides according to code and to precedents, and administers a law, supplied by the views prevailing in the particular age or country, if it knows, and relies upon no higher guidance. Thus the private moral judgments of the mass of men will never be far in advance of the views of the community, or country, and even the loftiest minds, to whom a higher revelation is given, will be influenced by them.

The view of morality held by the Israelites was coloured by the ideas of the time, and in their earliest history we find that state of morality which existed amongst the nations with whom they came in contact, and by whom they were surrounded. There is no evidence to show that in this respect the Patriarch Abraham was much, if at all, superior to the people in whose midst he lived, except in those rare instances where a special revelation had elevated his mind by the consciousness of a Divine Presence, and enabled him to see by faith another way of life along which he walked,

He stumbled in the path: nature's claims caused him to turn to Egypt (Gen. xii. 10-13), and his dealing with the ruler of that country, and afterwards with Abimelech (Gen. xx. 1-3), show that in those early days there was an absence of a profound sense of sin, even in the man to whom all the glorious promises of the future were made. God was connected with the sufferings, and judgments, which befal wicked men, but there was little or nothing of that state of mind which later is expressed in the Psalms and Prophets. Some sins they committed without seeming to have regarded them as such, till the penalty came and awoke their consciousness. This condition of life is recapitulated in the wilderness with a precision that is remarkable in every particular. The people have no idea of sin, wrong-doing is acknowledged in a vague kind of way, but not as a transgression of the law of God. Wicked men, but no man acknowledges that he is one of them, suffer according to the judgment of God; every disaster to man, or his tribe, is by the will of Allah. It seems highly probable that the state of Abraham, Abimelech, and others, at the time in which they lived, was that of men generally in their relation to the consciousness of sin, and that state has remained unchanged to the present day among their descendants, and their kinsmen, the inhabitants of the borderland of old Canaan.

The patriarch's treatment of Hagar is sanctioned by the customs of his time, his connection with her is in accord with the laws of the people of his earliest home. The code of Hammurabi was mainly commercial, but in it we find that a Babylonian household consisted of one wife and children; a second wife was taken for eco-

nomic reasons, and disposed of when occasion arose, or necessity required.

Although Abraham and the rest of his clan may have started at the same point, their respective descendants diverged farther and farther apart, as time passed, and the working of Divine Providence became more fully known and recognised. His successors in the line of promise responded to the will of God as they received it, not without an occasional relapse into the old ways, but these became less frequent as their knowledge of God grew, and His discipline shaped the course of their career as His people; while the offspring of the inhabitant of the wilderness (Gen. xxi. 20), Abraham's natural son, increased in number but not in knowledge, and remained in that state of life which recognised no law but its own desire.

A decided step was taken by the Israelites when the ten commandments became the foundation of their national law, especially the last of them which traced sin to its lurking place in the heart, and declared covetousness, which hitherto had not been defined, as offensive to God.

The distinction between the old order, the wild fierce spirits of the wilderness, and the new standard supplied by the revelation of God to the people called according to His purpose, cannot fail to be recognised as a great advance in their knowledge, and a marked improvement in their conduct. Revelation, so far as it enjoins moral principles, lays down in a more full and complete form what has been recognised independently, and will command it with a more imposing and constraining authority. Progress is thus made, and development is manifest, towards the maintenance of a higher standard of

thought and act. So far as laws Divinely given entered into details, while they softened the harshness of existing institutions, they were necessarily based on them, and in this way the new standard imposed on the people would not fail to be recognised as one possible of attainment; in this way the law of God was revealed to the loftiest minds of the descendants of Isaac. God revealed Himself gradually. He first declared His existence, manifested His power, showed His wisdom, revealed His love. The process of redemption grew as the race grew, slowly, gradually, step by step, as it grows in the heart of man to-day. But in the beginning of all things when God made man, before there was a distinction of Abraham's seed, or the provision of the moral law, He furnished him with the means of preserving his existence, and these are found to-day as the primary laws of his being, of the same form and character as in the ages that have gone.

The call of the blood is the manifestation of life for existence, and thus it is understood by those who regard the blood as the life. It calls the brethren for their help in danger, it calls for their vengeance when it is shed. The most primitive law for man is the response to this cry, the voice of the soul, or the instinct of nature, calling from the abyss of his life to the unseen Power from whence that life outflows.

God created man a creature of need in order that He might establish a connection, and the instinctive cry is heard whether it be that of "the natural man," or "the new creature". In the beginning the call for support was answered by the supply of appropriate food, and in like manner the first law was a response to the first call of the life for defence (Gen. ix. 3, 6, 7).

The hospitality practised by the Bedawin of the desert is prompted by the establishment of these laws in their life. "Be we all," say the poor nomads, "the guests of Allah," and so the wanderer is fed at "the table in the wilderness," and the fugitive is received in the refuge of the tent.

The life of the wild men of the desert deals in first principles, the law of support, and that of defence. They have not attained a higher standard of life and work. In their manners and customs we shall therefore find a witness of that time when man lived by his sword, "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him" (Gen. xvi. 12), an illustration of those dark ages of Old Testament history when the true aim of life was missed, and men remained entangled in the influences of their carnal nature, neglectful of God and His law, mindful only of their own way.

2. THEIR HISTORY.

Professor Sayce in his book on *Patriarchal Palestine* says, page 26: "The Nejeb or desert of the South was then, what it still is, the haunt of robbers and marauders"; page 40: "The Amalekites had not as yet intermingled with the Ishmaelites, and their Beduin blood was still pure. They were the Shasu, or Plunderers of the Egyptian inscriptions, sometimes also termed the Sitti, the Sute of the cuneiform texts. Like their modern descendants, they lived by the plunder of their peaceful neighbours. They were the wild offspring of the wilderness and accounted the first born of mankind" (Numbers xxiv. 20; Exodus xvii. 14). On page 53 he says: "Such then was the ethnological map of Palestine in the Patriarchal age. Canaanites in the lowlands,

Amorites and Hittites in the highlands contended for mastery. In the desert of the South were the Amalekite Beduin ever ready to raid and murder their settled neighbours. The mountains of Seir were occupied by the Horites, while prehistoric tribes who probably belonged to the Amorite race, inhabited the plateau east of the Jordan. This was the Palestine to which Abraham migrated, but it was a Palestine which his migration was destined eventually to change."

Before many generations had passed the Ishmaelites mingled with the Amalekites, and then, as now, infested the frontier of Judah, wasting and robbing the fields of the husbandmen, and allying themselves with every invader that came from the south. "Saul, indeed, punished them, as the Romans and Turks have punished them since; but the lesson is remembered only for a short while; when the strong hand is removed, the sons of the desert return again like locusts to their prey."

"Moab and Ammon [p. 53 continued], the children of his nephew, took the place of the older population of the Eastern table land, while Edom settled in Mount Seir. A few generations more and Israel too entered into its inheritance in Canaan itself. The Amorites were extirpated or became tributary, and the valleys of the Jordan and Kishon were seized by the invading tribes."

The record of the Old Testament accounts for the continual presence of the warring nations inhabiting the wilderness until the close of the old dispensation. It is followed by Roman history, where it deals with its conquest of Palestine, and the establishment of its rule beyond Jordan, and refers to the formation of the province of Roman Arabia, and the remains of a Nabatean kingdom in the desert land. The discoveries of recent

years have produced more evidence of their occupation of the country, and both spade and pen combine to complete our knowledge of the persistence of the wilderness people to maintain the reputation which they have held in the enduring history of their race. The rise of Mohammedan power from its bosom, is an exhibition of its vitality, and the spirit of antagonism, displayed in the Moslem character, to all progress, is a revival of the evil in an aggravated form, that has always distinguished the "wild man" in his antipathy to righteousness, either by a wilful disregard of its influence, or an outburst of passion for its destruction. A typical instance is furnished by the example of Balak, the King of Moab (Numbers xxii. 7), in his treatment of the nation which represented the righteousness of God, and the progress of civilisation. Other examples are sufficiently numerous to trace this malevolent power, which unhappily continues in Palestine and the East, despite the efforts of Christian agencies. These efforts seem to be most feeble in the lands where Moslem fanaticism is most strong, and resemble in a most amazing manner the weakness of God's witnesses to the wilderness people of old. There appears even now to be an inadequate knowledge of the nature of evil, as it is expressed in the form of religious life of the followers of the False Prophet, and a corresponding fear in the Christian Church to grapple with it. Missions are few where they ought to be many, and the little that is done to carry the truth to the barbarism of the desert would be ludicrous, if it was not so pathetic. The Cabinets of European nations, who profess to be Christian, combine to restrain all the advances of their people towards the evangelisation of Mohammedan countries,

and they represent in a great measure the complacent attitude of Christian men towards the "wild man," whose instincts are always employed in every land to paralyse the good, and resist all attempts to promote the ultimate well being of mankind by the cause of righteousness and truth.

The two principal tribes of the East are the Anazeh and Shammar who trace their descent like many others without difficulty to the time of the False Prophet, when they say "they were like the Jews". Beyond that time they cannot with the same certainty name the fathers of their race, but there have been left for generations their tribal marks, the "wusm," on the wild rocks of their ancient dwelling-place. Their history has not been inscribed by the pens of learned writers, but handed down from father to son, generation after generation, with unerring verbal accuracy. The outer world knows and recognises the survival of this ancient race by their unwavering fidelity to the customs of their forefathers, the "plunderers" of the past, instead of the usual documentary evidence of civilised nations.

The Shammar cover vast tracts of country in Mesopotamia, and as far south as the centre of Arabia. Their prince or emir rules over a population estimated by Doughty as follows: "a settled population in Jebel Shammar may be hardly 20,000 souls; add to these tributary nomads Beni Wahab—the Fejr 800, half tribe of Wulid Ali in the south 1,600,—say together 2,500; then Bishr in the south, say 3,000 or they are less; northern Harb in the obedience of Ibn Rashîd, say 2,000; southern Shammar hardly 2,000; midland Heteyn, say 1,500; Sherarât, say 2,500".

The old Sheikh of the Wulid Ali, when he was the

official guide of the Mecca pilgrims from Damascus to the Shammar borders, said the whole tribe of the Anazeh numbered over 300,000, but this estimate is probably an exaggeration, as he gave his own tribe in Syria and Arabia as 30,000. The Anazeh roam over the whole of the Syrian desert, and occupy certain parts of Arabia; the two branches of this great tribe found in the Hauran are the Wulid Ali and Er Rawalleh. The camps of the principal tribes in Moab and Gilead, the Beni Hassan, Beni Sakhr, Adwan and Hamydeh rarely consist of more than 200 tents—scattered in various directions in settlements, often only twenty and even less. In 1881, Colonel Conder collected the names of thirty-five smaller tribes, and though a reliable estimate of the number of persons in each tribe is more difficult to obtain, he noticed, and I can confirm his observations, that every father of a family has his tent, and as a rule five persons may be reckoned to a tent. On the basis of this calculation, the above-named explorer considers the nomadic population of Moab to consist of 2,200 tents or 11,000 souls, giving a density of ten persons to a square mile. In Arabia this is considerably reduced by the poverty of the country where the Bedawin exist on the scanty fare of the desert. The chief tribe on the south of the Dead Sea is the Howeytat. Next to them is the Billi, over the Harra, and nearer the *derb el hadj*, the pilgrim way. Beyond this line of march in the desert is the very ancient tribe of Jeheyna. Divisions of all these tribes are scattered over a wide area, and very many lesser tribes, more or less independent, but in many cases tributary to their larger neighbours, in settled homes and wandering villages help to fill the empty wilderness.

The history of one tribe will be a sufficient illustration of all. Colonel Conder in *Heth and Moab* (p. 318) says, "The history of the Adwan tribe, as related by Sheikh Goblân is as follows: 'About three centuries ago, or nine generations, all known by name, Fouzan Ibn es Suweit, one of the Defir tribe in the Nejed, fled, in consequence of having slain his cousin, to the Moab plateau, and found refuge with the Korda tribe at Sâmik east of Heshbon. He afterwards married a daughter of Abon Heider, chief of the Korda tribe, and had two sons —Saleh, from whom descend the elder Adwân branch, called Ashiret Saleh, of whom Ali Diab is now chief: and Jedid, from whom Goblan claims to be the eighth descendant. The heir of Ali Diab is a boy named Sultan; the heir of Nimr or younger branch is Goblan's son Fahed, the Lynx who has a boy named Fowaz. The names of the intermediate generations have no special interest. It may be noted, however, that Jedid and his descendants all married into the Korda tribe (which has now disappeared or become merged with the Adwân) down to the time of Goblan's grandfather Nimr who took a bride of the Beni Ṣakhr. Goblan's father Fadl married one of the Ajermeh, though now a small and poor tribe, belonging to one of the clans which the Adwân found in the Belka, when their fugitive ancestor sought hospitality with the Korda in the sixteenth century.'

"The ease with which Goblân recounted these pedigrees gives a good example of the way in which such knowledge is orally preserved among a people entirely illiterate. It is also remarkable that the tribes which came most recently from the Nejed are those which consider themselves most noble, and which practically are the dominant class."

The designation of the people of the wilderness most familiar to Europeans is Bedouin, Beduin or Bedawin. Their own name for the race is El Arab, which signifies "the people". Bedawin travellers, when they meet with herdsmen and wish to know the situation of a camp, will say, "*Fain el Arab?*" *i.e.* "Where are the people?" "*Bedawy*" is the singular, and "*Bedu*" the plural used for the inhabitant of the wilderness, from "*badia*" "a waste". The people of the wilderness are the inhabitants of the waste, and even if their origin or history could not be traced, it is really of secondary importance to the fact, that we have in their manners and customs a representation of that condition of life which existed in the Patriarchal age; that they have continued to live, as it was prophesied of Ishmael, is enough to satisfy the unbiased mind of their existence being a witness to the truth of Scripture, and more especially when it is compared with the history of the descendants of the other son of Abraham, through whose line we can trace the development of religious faith of the most perfect kind.

THE CAMP OF A POOR TRIBE.

CHAPTER III.

THE LIFE OF THE WILDERNESS.

1. THE DESERT HOME.

THERE is something inexpressibly fascinating in the refreshing simplicity of the wilderness home, when the fierce spirit that disturbs the peace of the inhabitants is subdued for a time, and no cause for alarm agitates their minds. A delightful air of abandonment and disorder prevails in the camp. Children play about the tent ropes, and bound through the apertures of the worsted booths, tumbling over a multitude of objects scattered carelessly about the house: men lazily rest at the door in the heat of the day (Gen. xviii. 1), or slumber in the shadow of the curtain; women sit and spin, or engage in some household duty that requires little exertion. Nearly everything is constructed on the principle that work brings weariness, an unnecessary and undesirable addition to the ills of their common life.

Articles which look formidable in a list are packed away in an incredibly small compass, when they are collected. All are of a portable nature, so that the tent and all its accessories can be removed with as little labour as possible. If the establishment was conducted on a more elaborate plan, living would be irksome, and life a burden, greater than could be sustained by so few advantages as are attainable in the desert.

Restfulness constitutes one of the chief pleasures of their dwelling-place, and one of the great necessities of the climate. The anxieties of men living under arms naturally disturb the peace and quietude of their home; they are sufficiently onerous without any further reason for care. The transitory nature of their existence, calling for continual change, a moving to and fro, with no abiding, also demands a season of rest; and with the uncertainty of life always before them they are glad to secure it as often as circumstances permit and opportunities afford.

Sleep brings forgetfulness. All therefore indulge in slumber through the heat of the day, when no occupation calls them away from home. A slumbering man is rarely disturbed, his peaceful condition is essential for his welfare, and is universally believed to be the period of life when man is beyond the reach of care and the strife of men, nearer indeed to that blissful state of rest where the turmoil of life has ceased for ever. Let him lie. The natural solicitude of man for another's rest is a recognition of his own need, and the appreciation of the value of sleep is best shown by employing the time at their disposal in the way that nature suggests; watchfulness is for the night, when the wilderness is filled with alarms.

A tent is not only comfortable, but in many respects luxurious in its accommodation, though it is largely involved with considerations of personal taste, and individual notions of what constitutes the idea of comfort. Life as seen in the wilderness is known by the sparsity of its needs, and the limited measure of their supply. Nature is not prodigal in the desert, except in the silence and monotony of the long stretch of undulating country,

THE INTERIOR OF A TENT.

with few habitations and fewer means of support. The bare ground, beneath a shelter from the burning sun, is the couch of the sleeping man. A gentle breeze may fan his face as it is caught by the open tent; there he rests in dreamland where fancy pictures of pleasure or pain float through his simple mind. His walking thoughts are ever on the ghrazzu, if he lives across the Hadj road; to win of course, and he cares not who loses, even though he may have gained but little, his hopes are bright and he muses on the success he may yet achieve.

The removing of the camp of the Bedawin and the driving of the cattle with them from one pasture ground to another is called the "*rahla*". In the "*menzul*" the council of the elders, *i.e.* the "*meglis*," has determined whether they shall go, and when they shall start, or it may be according to the Sheikh's mind, and left to his will. His neighbours watch, as soon as the day is light, and the dawn spreads its mantle around them, to see if his hareem, the women, strike the tent; seeing this, it is the *rahla*. The women then hasten to pluck up the tent pegs, their houses of hair fall, the tent cloth is rolled up, the tent poles are gathered, and bound together in a bundle; they drag out the household stuff deposited in worsted sacks of their own weaving, to load them upon the burden camels. The herdsmen now drive forward the cattle, the women mount with their baggage, and the rest of the men, with their weapons, ride behind with the Sheikh. If the *rahla* is short, the Bedawin march at leisure, the beasts feeding as they go. But if the Sheikh's tent remains standing after sunrise, when the cattle should be sent to pasture, the people begin to say, let the beasts feed, there will be no *rahla* to-day.

In October of each year, before the first rains fall, the larger tribes of the Hauran, the two branches of the Anazeh, the Wulid Ali, and Rawalleh, leave their summer quarters for the Syrian desert. It is the time for greater vigilance amongst the settled population, because the Bedawin are eager to carry with them to their winter retreat anything that can be conveyed without unnecessary alarm. A general disturbance is a sign of preparation for the great *rahla*, called sometimes *rubia*, as it is the half-yearly march of the tribe, and thus differs from the fortnightly change of the situation of the camp. A host of several thousands cannot move without attracting the attention of the Government and the residents of the country, who well know that the desert home of the nomads is difficult to search for missing articles. Here they gather dates in the oases for their winter store, for on this fruit and milk they subsist almost entirely, varied by an occasional feast when cattle are slain in sacrifice, or the produce of the chase; game abounds in abundance and the Anazeh are mighty hunters. Hawks are freely used by all the tribes of the Syrian desert. When the bird is set free it rises in the air, and perceiving its prey, swoops down upon it, pecking at its eyes and holding it until the hunter arrives to despatch it. Gazelles are followed by greyhounds, and mounted men armed with rifles; hares also suffer the same fate, but the success is not as complete as at all times desirable. In the mountainous districts round the Dead Sea, the ibex or wild goat is hunted by the Bedawy who is a keen sportsman, quick in his movements, and a good shot; but few possess these qualifications. The Wulid Ali take with them during their migrations, herds numbering many thous-

AN OASIS IN THE DESERT.

TRAVELLING IN THE WILDERNESS.

ands of camels: the goats and cattle are left behind in the Jaulan, in the care of those members of the tribe who have elected to remain in the country. Nomads in the south who are not the fortunate possessors of a summer abode, where the air is less stifling than on the sand covered plain, and a winter retreat from the cold of the bleak hills of the Western Hauran, keep with them the whole of their beasts, which form the wealth of their tribe. Their poverty, when it causes them to feel its sharp pinch, is found in a camp denuded of its cattle through a disastrous raid, or a grievous murrain. In ordinary circumstances a Bedawy may own camels worth £120. There are few indeed in a tribe of note who have less than the value of £60. Although camels are used for riding as well as the bearers of burdens, and for the supply of milk for the family, the spearmen, who may be reckoned as the fighting men of the tribe, also possess mares. It is a debatable point whether the Shammar or Wulid Ali own the best breed of horses. As a rule they do not sell the mares, unless prices of £1,000 or more be offered. The chief of the Shammar deals largely in horses, but almost in all cases mares are reserved for presents of the most valuable kind. They frequently belong to two or more tribesmen who take a foal in turn as their share, the mare remaining in the possession and under the control of the principal partner.

Foals are reared on camels' milk up to their third year, and the greatest care is conferred upon them; after the third year they are fed on dates; and the best bred mares never touch barley. They are accustomed to the freedom of the camp, and walk into the tent for occasional shelter from the noonday heat. Children play

with them without fear, and rarely suffer from the friend of the family on whom they place their affection. A sheikh will look after his own mare, giving it the first milk that enters the camp, seeking its welfare with a kindliness he seldom shows to his wife.

An encampment is never far from water, though a discreet distance is observed, as the wells are the resort of travellers and strangers of all kinds, undesirable associates as well as friends. The choice of camping ground depends more on the quality and quantity of the pasturage of the neighbourhood, than on anything else, and the camp remains in one place until it is exhausted. Smaller camps are generally found near a larger settlement and their arrangements are constantly changing. The Arabs seem rarely to remain more than ten days or a fortnight in one place (*cf.* St. Luke xvi. 9).

Each tribe has a recognised position in a district defined by a well-known boundary. Neutral ground, or land in the disputed possession of a tribe, separates one from another in some parts of the country; while smaller tribes often have their patrimony in the territory of a larger tribe, which exercises a protecting care over the vassal clan for the help it may render in a great crisis.

The prestige of a tribe is not always dependent on its numerical importance. It may have a reputation for valour. Sometimes it owes its influence to the strategical value of its territorial possessions, their proximity to the highways, or caravan routes, of the country, being of immense importance in conserving their power, and affording assistance for the accumulation of wealth. The comparatively small tribe of the Adwan

is established in that part of the country containing the main road to Western Palestine, and the way to Jerusalem from the east. The Beni Sakhr rules the land through which the Hadj must pass to Mecca. And the sheikh of the Wulid Ali is in receipt of a government subsidy for the protection of the Hadj on its annual pilgrimage.

The largest and most numerous tribe of Bedawin in Eastern Palestine is the Anazeh. It is divided into four branches, Er Rawalleh, El Bisheir, Wulid Ali, and El Hassaneh, scattered throughout the Syrian desert almost to the centre of Arabia in the winter season, and returning for pasturage in the summer to the Hauran. Of these the Wulid Ali is most frequently found in Palestine. Their grazing grounds are becoming more restricted every year, owing to the encroachments of the settlements of Circassians, and the migration of peasants from Samaria, under the increasing authority of the Turkish government. A gradual strengthening of the Ottoman dominion has caused a corresponding decrease of Bedawin rule and power. Fifty years ago the Anazeh sheikhs were lords paramount, exacting tribute, which was unwillingly tendered by the people in the villages under their protection, in the form of grain or flocks. This was called "*kuhweh*," or brother share, and is similar in form and practice to the custom in vogue when David led his armed band through the wilderness of Judea, and protected the flocks of Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 4-13.). "Now David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. David sent out ten young men and said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity,

Peace be both to thee, . . .and unto all that thou hast . . .now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel," etc.

Many deserted villages in the rich and fertile lands of the Hauran, recently occupied, were laid waste by the Bedawin because the inhabitants failed to pay this *kuhweh* regularly. The people fearing further ill-treatment left them for more secure abodes in the vicinity of towns more directly under Turkish rule. The *kuhweh* has now passed into obscurity through the strengthening of the central government of the province in which the Bedawin pasture their flocks. Inactive Mutaserifs have been replaced by a military governor, whose authority is made manifest by the presence of a company of mounted police recruited from the Circassians, who are well paid and well armed, garrisons of Turkish soldiers at various military stations, and sub-governors of districts, under the direct control of the Mutaserif of the Hauran.

The resources of Eastern Palestine are capable of sustaining a population infinitely greater than any other part of the Bedawin country. The tribes of the Arabian desert call it "the land of bread," "the land of milk". There can be no comparison between them as regards the power of support and the supply of the necessaries of life.

Farther east and south in the long summer drought when the slight pastures in the vicinity of the camps fail, and the camel gives no milk, there is a secret gnawing of gaunt hunger shown by pinched cheeks and languid movements. Children cease to run while the fast continues, and the women suffer in silence. Still the sons of the desert survive on the irregular fare of the

wilderness, and fasting has no doubt played an important part in the formation of the Arab temperament.

When the spot has been selected where Bedawin will camp, the sheikh strikes down the shaft of his tall horseman's lance, twice or thrice as long as his steed; this is the standard of fellowship. They that camp with him are his people. His tent is then raised, and close by is put up the *menzul*, the council, and club tent, where guests are received, unless a portion of the chief's tent is set apart for that purpose, and called by that name. This is more usual in the Hauran and its borders, the sheikh being rich enough to provide coffee for all who seek his hospitality, and food as required by the stranger. A prominent place is selected for it, and the tents of the tribesmen, in a large or very small settlement, are pitched round about it in a recognised plan, the whole camp being in the form of a rectangle, where line upon line of tents with a sufficiency of space between them resemble the streets of a town. There is less regard for this formation in other parts of the wilderness; individual taste in the choice of a suitable spot being more important than the consideration of a general arrangement. Sometimes all form a square where the animals can be tethered within its borders. But in all places the tent of the chief, the *menzul*, occupies a prominent and central position, and the tall spear in front indicates the centre of government, and is the sign of authority. Its position is a reminder of the wilderness life of the Israelites, when the tent of their chief, the Almighty God, was placed in the centre of the camp, and in obedience to His commandments the tribes "encamped round about the tabernacle" (see Numbers i. 50, iii. 23, 29, 35, 38).

The tents are dark brown, with sometimes a strip of grey cloth inserted, but in appearance they are like "the tents of Kedar" (Cant. i. 5), the colour of the goats' hair, woven into the cloth used in their construction.

The tent is a long rectangular structure, composed of pieces of cloth, strong and coarse, thrown over a framework of poles, leaving one side open throughout its entire length, except on the part occupied by the hareem, and that is partially closed to hide the property of the family; it is fastened by ropes tied to pegs driven into the ground, the nails mentioned in the account of the death of Sisera (Judges v. 21). To every pair of cords there is a pair of stakes; in the centre for additional support in the loftiest part, three stakes are used for a pair of cords. An extra piece of cloth is sewn to the covering at the heads of the props, to keep it from fraying with the extra wear and tear of these stakes, as a tent strains heavily in boisterous weather; and with care, it is said, a tent will serve a generation. The cords, simple twists of the woman's spinning, have to be renewed from time to time.

The loftiest part of the tent is high enough for the tallest man to stand erect; from the central ridge it slopes to the ground at the back and sides, like the inclined roof of a house. In winter, when the weather is calculated to create discomfort in a house that is ill prepared to withstand the tempests of wind and rain, large stones are used to keep the back and sides from being blown upwards, for the breeze to penetrate the house, and lift it off its supports. In front bushes form a hedge to make the inside less ventilated than is desirable in the season of cold. A hanging curtain divides

the tent into two parts; it is never more than breast high, and only keeps one side separate from the other to enable the men to feel that distinction between the sexes, which is a notable feature of their life, and to provide a place for them to talk, and one for the women to work.

The tent cloth at the back can be easily moved according to the wind and sun, so that the back of the house may become the front, at the discretion of the occupants. A good wife, and there are many, will not require to be told when this has to be done, she is alert enough to notice the need of the change, and will unpin and move the cloth, for her husband and his guests to have shade or shelter according to their need.

The tent of the chief is conspicuous for its length as well as position, and is often more than 120 feet long. It will be divided into two, even three compartments, according to the size and requirements of the family. One portion is reserved for feasts and entertainments, for tribesmen and guests, another for women and children, the hareem, and perhaps a third for baggage, when the sheikh is well to do and his household stuff is considerable. It will consist of rich carpets to spread on the ground when important guests arrive in the camp, silken pillows and quilts also, for their bed at night.

A tent is called "*beit*," or house, "*haima*," the proper word for tent, being seldom used except in conjunction with the former, as "*beit el haim*," "the house of hair".

On the women's side there will be sacks of tent cloth for storing the household goods; corn and rice, sugar and coffee, and salt, a very useful commodity for use in every dish of food, difficult to obtain, and therefore of considerable value; calico and wool and yarn for the

clothing of the family; water skins and all household requisites, and cooking utensils; and a mill for grinding the corn for their daily bread.

The most precious thing of all is the housewife's box, her private property, for storing her few poor ornaments, a gold or silver nose ring, bracelets and bangles, inherited from her family and brought out for show on brave occasions. These, and the few things of her husband's which are in her keeping, are concealed in this box, and placed under lock and key. If her lord is a man of substance, the box is bigger, more imposing and attractive in appearance, and assumes an importance superior to the ordinary receptacle of a woman's trifles. Within it will be deposited the valuables of the great chief, and its key will repose on his person instead of hanging as a pendant to a woman's veil.

This box, containing that which is most precious in the sight of the principal sheikh, concealed in the most private, the innermost part of his dwelling-place, bears a significance in its relation to other portions of the tent, and its position in the camp, that is worthy of the most serious consideration.

In the revelation of God's will to the Israelites on their wilderness journey, a Divine plan was shown to them, by which they could enter into fellowship with Him. It established a way of approach to Him, ensured His direct control, and supplied them with the power to enjoy it. In the centre of their camp His tent was pitched as a witness of His continual Presence (Numbers ii. 2). It was the centre of government, the sign of His authority. The innermost part of it contained the "ark," which without irreverence, may be described as a "box" (Ex. xxvi. 34). And when we re-

AN ENCAMPMENT IN THE WILDERNESS.

member that revelation was given by God to man to raise him to a higher state of life than the one in which he lived, we may assume with reason that the successive steps of his elevation began with something which he could understand, and probably had partially recognised independently, as the commencement of the upward path.

Here in the arrangement of a Bedawin camp, the position of the sheikh's tent, the box in the secret apartment of his home, and the authority vested in his person, there is something that might reasonably be supposed to bear a striking resemblance to the old wilderness life of the wandering people to whom God revealed His plan.

The entire system of the ancient "Law," and of the dispensation under which the Israelites lived as a peculiar people, was pervaded by symbolism, the most wonderful that can be conceived; yet in its simplest form it is entirely suited to the Oriental love of symbolic expression. Even now the use of figurative language is common amongst all classes. All the men of the East clothe their thoughts in a dress of their own weaving, and in a way that obscures their real meaning to one who is unaccustomed to this form of speech.

Familiar objects were frequently used by our Lord for the purpose of teaching some great truth; the simplicity of their natural imagery appealed to the sympathies of His hearers, and led them to regard with greater favour the lessons they were designed to convey.

It would be unwise to attempt more than suggest that the general idea of the camp and its arrangements, or, as it is called in the wilderness, "the fellowship," of

the sheikh whose spear stands before his tent, was the familiar object used by the God of Israel as a sign for directing the thoughts and aspirations of His people to a more sublime ordinance of their faith. See Appendix, p. 210.

The guest tent in which the elders of the community meet to discuss matters of tribal interest they call the *menzul*. In Arabia the whole camp is termed *menzil*. An inferior tribe with an insignificant head, as poor as the meanest tribesman, might have a separate tent, but in the camp of a tribe with a rich sheikh it is that part of his tent provided for the entertainment of his friends, and the reception of his guests. It would also be regarded as the club house, and council chamber. Here will be reported the movements of their foes, the signs of raiders, and the tidings from other camps. Every tribesman can raise his voice in the common assembly, and this is not a mere figure of speech, there is often a clamour when incontinent minds express their feelings.

Although tribesmen live together in harmony, the Bedawin are factious spirits and some differences spring daily in a wandering village, and in the morning they are deferred to the *meglis*, or council of elders, the public tribunal, where a tribesman may plead his cause. It is maintained on both sides by partisans who espouse one side or other with a great deal of noise and many vehement gestures. Any one that is present may offer advice; the nomad court of justice is free to all. The sheikh will take counsel with other sheikhs and elders, and judgment is given without partiality, without bribes, and without delay. The sentence is final, and will admit of no appeal from either side. Disputes between

tribes are subject to the interference of the Turkish government, to the great regret of all who are compelled to submit to its authority, because of the length of time that is required for the performance of the duty of its officials, the bribes they expect, and the patent injustice of the alleged settlement.

Fines are levied according to the decision of the *meglis*, and must be paid, or the offender will be compelled to leave his tribe, and go into exile before the sheikh sends some tribesmen to distrain on his cattle.

The judges seldom err in these small communities, where the life of every member lies open from his infancy, and is known to all his kindred. One sitting is sufficient to settle any cause, unless some witnesses are absent, it is then deferred to a subsequent occasion.

The position of a sheikh varies according to the size of the tribe over which he rules with a paternal moderation, and the reputation he bears amongst his people.

The chief of an important tribe is treated with the greatest respect; when he rides a number of horsemen accompany him; when he sits in the *menzul* an array of courtiers gathers round his person. An air of distinction, even of princely bearing, but devoid of all arrogance of manner, is often the outward sign of a man possessed of a character notable for generosity and honour. Here is "a man!"—"*er rajul!*" repeated with emphasis, when manly worth is mentioned by any Bedawin. Few indeed are found in the wilderness.

Arabs confirm all their words with an oath (Gen. xxvi. 28). "As the Lord liveth" (1 Kings xvii. 1) is a very common expression, or a man may swear by his head, or upon the "honour of his beard". Amongst those who profess to be religious, an oath, when they swear

by their faith is lightly made, and with a mental reservation. For the better assurance of a promise, they ask and give the hand: it is a visible pledge, easily taken and broken with equal facility (Ezekiel xvii. 18: "Seeing he despised the oath, by breaking the covenant, when lo, he had given his hand"). A Bedawy will swear to some true matters with the oath, "*wellâhi*," which is very solemn and very binding, and will be observed if it is not against his own interests: every oath may be lawfully broken in an extremity. To clear himself of an unjust suspicion one man will say to another: "There is nothing between us but Allah" (*cf.* 1 Sam. xx. 42: "And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying The Lord be between me and thee").

There are certain oaths received by the custom of the Bedawin as binding, and these will not be violated by an honourable man. A herdsman entrusted with another man's cattle will render an account with exactitude, making, as he recounts the increase of the herd, the usual protestations, while his employer traces a ring round him with a sword. If anything is missing from a tent or camp the owner of that which is lost or strayed, may require of any tribesman an oath of denial as Ahab "took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not" (1 Kings xviii. 10), when searching for Elijah.

If a man is under an imputation, in order that it might be removed he will go to the hearth of the *menzul* with the accuser, and give his answer over certain lines in the form of a cross in a circle which are made in the ashes by the point of a sword.

Gestures are tokens of great significance (Deut. xxi.

6, 7; Gen. xiv. 22; Isa. lxv. 2). They are so common it might appear as if they were meaningless. On taking an oath the hand is uplifted in a very solemn manner. Abraham used this gesture in taking an oath before the King of Sodom (Gen. xiv. 22), saying "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, that I will not take . . . anything that is thine," etc. To spread out the hands is an indication of good will toward an offender and denotes mercy (see Isa. lxv. 2: "I have spread out my hands all day unto a rebellious people").

To admonish a man one will smooth his beard before him, to cause him to remember his honour. Touching another's beard will remind him of their common humanity, and witness that God is over all, but plucking it or pulling it is the greatest indignity that one man can offer to another; the beard being a mark of honour (2 Sam. x. 4).

The *meglis* meets generally in a morning, the afternoon being the rest time for all who are in the camp. There is nothing to do for the men who are able to employ herdsmen for their cattle, but to sleep. The defence of their property is a great concern, and the raiding for booty is more important still. When not engaged in these active operations, there is the wife to scold or the children to curse. It will depend on the humour of the man whether he cares to stir up strife in the family circle, or lazily occupy the floor of his curtained home in repose.

As the sun is setting the wife brings a few small, dry thorny bushes, gathered from the wilderness, to make a fire on the hearth, then prepares the evening meal. Most of the men are in their tents waiting for the simple fare that will be set before them; the camels

that have been in use during the day lie crouched near the dwellings wagging their discontented chins; the mare is tethered by the entrance within sight of the family quietly eating its supper; the multitudinous noises of the encampment have settled down into a murmur. An occasional snort from one of the horses and the monotonous mirth of the children are the only sounds that break the stillness of the evening, except perhaps a bark or a yelp from a nomad dog as it is struck by an angry woman or spiteful child. There is a smell of cooking in the air and the hungry men sitting with their legs crossed or lying in a recumbent position with head on one hand, scarcely restrain their impatience as the appetite is sharpened by the odours from various fires. When the supper is ready they greedily devour the food in a few minutes as if they had little to eat or little time to consume it. When the men have finished, the women and small children partake of what is left, as the men saunter off to the *menzul* to drink coffee with their friends; sitting in silence while others join in the conversation, until roused by some chance remark that calls for a response.

Discussions in the *menzul* rarely include matters that have not been mentioned many times already, but repetition will not lessen the pleasure they derive from the use of their tongues in recounting the simple details of their common life, or the disposition of the tribes around them. The vagaries of individuals they have met are a source of amusement when described by a tribesman with a gift of humour. Witticisms are by no means unknown in a camp. The nomads are quick to perceive eccentricities in others and the sense of the ridiculous is found amongst the most alert minds. They are incap-

TWO SHEIKHS OF THE NIMR TRIBE.

A COMMON MEAL.

able of abstract thought or the serious study of any subject and the sequence of ideas is unhappily rare. All their stories would have to be rewritten before they could even be understood by a Western people. A common story, heard in every camp, varying in its details according to the narrator, is the history of Zir, one of the greatest of the black heroes of Arabia. Conder's version, recorded in *Heth and Moab*, p. 366, contains all the main features. "Zir was perhaps a real chief of the days of the Moslem conquest under Omar; but the favourite legend of his life is full of wonders. In his youth he was an enormous feeder, and drank more than ten other men, both of wine and water. He was reproached by his relations with sloth and cowardice, because, when his brother was slain, he remained a whole night without doing anything, after which he arose and avenged him. Later, however, he was seized by his foes and cut into small pieces, which were placed in a box, and the box thrown into the sea. The waves carried the coffer to Beyrout, which was then ruled by King Hakmûn ('the wise'), who was a Jew. The fishermen in the bay fished up the box in their nets, and, supposing it to hold a treasure, began to quarrel over it. They were, therefore, brought before King Hakmûn, and when the chest was open Zir was found inside, whole, but covered with scars. He was revived, and became a groom in the King's stable, where he was again regarded as a poor foolish creature, just as before his murder.

"Meantime a war broke out, and Hakmûn marshalled his forces, leaving only women and boys at home. Zir was, of course, not considered capable of fighting; but the King's daughter saw him seated on a wall with a

pole in his hand, dashing his bare heels against the stone till they bled, and brandishing his pole like a lance. This having happened thrice, the Princess told the King of the strange behaviour of his groom, who was at once brought in and asked the meaning of his folly. He replied that he wanted to go and fight with the rest, and was trying to imagine himself on horseback in a battle. The King, pleased with such eagerness for war, took Zir at once to the stable, and bade him choose a horse; but it was then discovered that no beast was able to bear the extraordinary weight of the champion, save one heroic horse, a foal by the immortal sea horse of an Arab mare.

"On the next day the battle was again arrayed, and Zir rode off with the King. A great defeat of the enemy followed, and Zir was seen killing right and left; but when the evening came, the chiefs were boasting of how many they had each slain, and the groom stood silent, as though ashamed. They mocked him, and asked where his prisoners were; and at length he bade them follow him to a huge stone, which he recommended them to raise. This all the united strength of the warriors was unable to accomplish, and at length, Zir, unaided, like the young Theseus, rolled away the stone, and beneath were found 1,500 bridles and 1,500 tongues of men whom Zir had slain, and whose steeds he had captured. After this his power was at once recognised, and he became a mighty prince, and married the Princess, and lived happy ever after."

A strange visitor may introduce other subjects by giving them information of the world beyond their home, thus opening their vacant minds and then filling them with an assortment of ideas that cannot be

assimilated. Mental indigestion follows, and strange items of intelligence pass round the camp, to amaze or amuse those who hear them, according to their state of credulity, or their opinion of the bearer of the news.

Shrewd nomads, with the power of impressing their brethren with a sense of their skill in foretelling the right time to undertake an adventure, obtain a suitable recognition of their pretensions. Their words are accepted as the utterances of wise men, and they are not likely to vacate the exalted position they have attained by careless speech. Their opinions are always given after mature deliberation in a dignified manner, appropriate to the occasion, and the way in which they ought to be received.

Story-tellers with an unusual gift of eloquence are seldom found in permanent residence. They gain more applause by moving from one place to another. A wandering minstrel, whose delight in life is the sound of his own voice, and distress of mind the dearth of hearers, travels from camp to camp. He is sure of a hearty welcome, and a most interested audience, who will listen with the utmost eagerness to his recital of the deeds of mythical heroes, or his improvised songs honouring the chief and tribe whose guest for the time he happens to be.

The feelings of all Eastern people lie near the surface ready to burst the thin crust of restraint that keeps them in their temporary abode. As the story-teller in a weird kind of chant, with a loud voice, recites his tale of war, the fever of battle burns in the listeners, and their eyes strained with intensity watch the dramatic gestures that illustrate his story, till their excitement knows no bounds, and swords are gripped, and voices raised into yells of applause.

By midnight they will have returned to their tents to sleep, the nomad dogs keeping guard of the camp, though despised and disowned by the man they faithfully serve. Watch-fires, their duty over, flicker and die, and the whole camp rests in the fitful slumber of men who have already slept, and dare not in their wilderness home forget that in the chill air of the silent night, men who love the darkness roam the desert, to carry off the cattle of sleeping men, and leave their owners with gaping wounds and faces turned upwards to the darkened sky.

Belated travellers approaching the camp at night, before the men retire to rest, see the watch-fires suddenly disappear; the inmates of the dwellings have quenched them with sand to gain a better view of the men who seek their abodes, and destroy the light that would guide the strangers to the camp. Voices are hushed as they think of a *ghrazzu*, and when the visitors reach the camp they sit at the entrance to a tent in suspense, waiting for some hospitable sign from the whisperers within, who are watching the behaviour of the late arrivals. When satisfied with their peaceful demeanour the men are greeted with "*Salaam alaikum*," "Peace be unto you," and the strangers gladly answer "*Alaikum es Salaam*," "And unto you be peace". The sand is raked from the fires, and they are stirred into a cheerful blaze, the alarm being over the word of peace is given, a meal is prepared, and the wanderers entertained as guests.

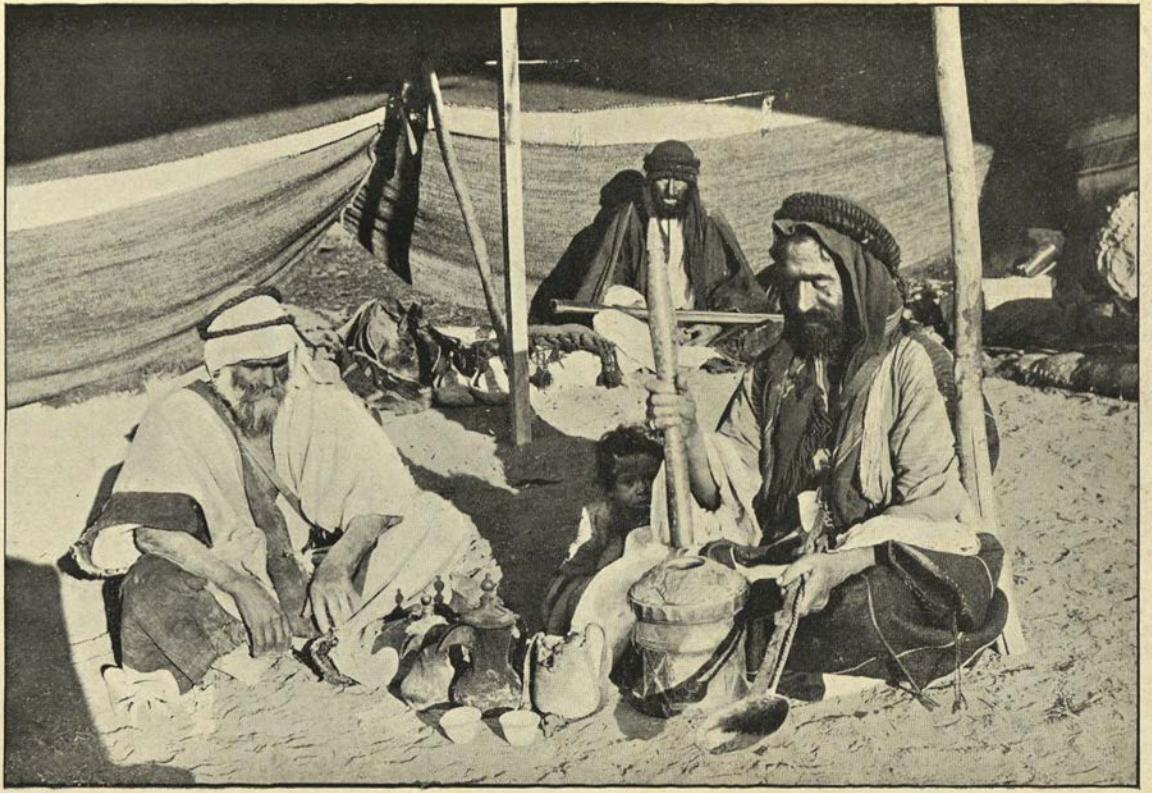
2. The Table in the Wilderness.

Hospitality is one of the essential characteristics of the wilderness life; as Allah sends provision, it is for all, so runs the message one man delivers to another in

the common sayings of the people. Elsewhere lapse of time and change of condition have modified every department of human affairs. Here in the desert, among the flinty hills and arid wastes, the old hospitality retains its ancient attributes, the dignified and open-handed courtesy of the ancient Patriarchs. "And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground" (Gen. xviii. 2-8; see also Gen. xix. 1; Ex. ii. 20; Judges xiii. 15, xix. 7, 21).

Of all virtues hospitality is extolled as the highest, and every one strives to maintain unsullied the reputation borne by the nomad tribes who depend on the scanty fare received from God's bounty for His guests. It is not a modern virtue, a new disposition of the character of the inhabitants of movable tents, but a survival of the generous treatment offered to the wayfaring man and stranger in the empty wilderness, before the dawn of civilisation made more ample provision for mankind by the discovery of the secrets of the storehouse of the earth. The practice of hospitality assumes most generous proportions in the land where the people are continually changing their abode, moving from place to place, conscious of the transitory nature of their existence, and its needs. Need is a word that might be written across the face of the country—need of support and need of defence. It is met by a universal custom, which the nature of the case has legitimately demanded, of offering a share of what a man possesses, however small, to all who apply for succour. This extends equally well to the wanderer in need of food and the fugitive in need of a refuge.

Hospitality being the first of all duties, a guest tent is provided in every camp; it may be a part of the sheikh's habitation, or a separate "house of hair"; every other tent is ready for the stranger, and if the owner has insufficient wellfaring, it can be procured from a neighbour, ever ready to lend and glad to distribute; indeed all are willing to help and often vie with each other in their endeavours to supply the needs of the stranger who is called "*thaif Allah*," "the guest of God". There is a keener sense of God's providence for His people where the resources of the camp are most meagre; afar in the sun-stricken country of the East a kindlier welcome greets the wearied traveller than on the Palestine border where plenty takes the place of want. He is received with gentle courtesy, and terms of peace in the open day, when the alert looks of his entertainers can inspect him in a moment. At night their hesitant manner is due to fear. When the customary salutation is given, "*Salaam alaikum*," "Peace be unto you," the guest is ushered into the apartment near the hearth, his horse is tethered hard by, and treated as well as his master. The hereditary coffee-maker receives a few green berries from the pouch of the sheikh and commences to roast them in a ladle over the few embers of a fire that has to be coaxed into a flame. The operation of pounding them in a mortar in a most dexterous manner with a pestle, follows; it attracts general attention as the beverage will be offered to every one in the tent, after the guest has been first supplied; the rhythmic movement of the pestle is a musical performance of no mean order among the Bedawin, and delights the men because it is the prelude to something better. As the shadows deepen into twilight preparations for the even-



THE COFFEE MAKER.

ing meal cause the appetites of the waiting guests to sharpen in the cooler air. Talking is less easy when expectation is acute, but conversation is maintained before the guest in a desultory fashion in order that he may receive the compliments generally offered to a stranger, and the comfortable assurance of the host, by the courtesy of a well-ordered camp. Guests are not questioned about their business, unless one of them is a European, and then inquiries will first be made through his servant. Etiquette requires no introduction, and enjoins a discreet silence about the cause of a stranger's appearance. No business is transacted nor anything of importance considered in relation to the arrival of the guest, before a meal, however pressing. If he has come to negotiate terms of peace, or arrange for the ransom, for blood shed in a feud or foray, his errand is not even mentioned till he has received the "bread and salt". Serious affairs are never discussed before supper, they remain in abeyance until every man is fed, and may even be postponed to the morning despite the anxiety for a settlement of the matter in hand. As in the time of Samuel, "ye shall eat with me to-day and to-morrow I will let thee go" (1. Samuel ix. 19), so also in earlier days Isaac "made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware to one another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace" (Genesis xxvi. 30, 31).

The covenant is made by eating of bread, or as they put it "bread and salt," "*aish u milhh*," not "salt," as is generally understood. It lasts as long as it remains in the stomach, which practically means while they are in communion with one another, beyond that time it is no longer binding. The offer of food is a pledge of peace

already expressed, when the guest is received (*cf.* St. Luke xxii. 19, 21; St. Matt. xxvi. 23; Acts ii. 42), and its acceptance seals the covenant of friendship, which confers an obligation on both parties, but more especially on the recipient of the favour, which cannot lightly be disregarded. If any man refused to accept the hospitality offered, a sinister motive would in all probability be the reason for his refusal, but it would never be shown in a camp without exciting the wrath of the host. If invited to enter the tent he would pass with an excuse expressed in a courteous manner to allay suspicion, or if asked by wayfarers eating on the road to join them, he might decline; in that case, unless there was strong evidence of haste, it would be well to be on guard at nightfall. On one occasion when I camped in Moab, I hailed two men, who turned in the inquisitive manner of all nomads to examine my company, and asked them to eat with us, but they rode off without ceremony, and before the dawn an attempt was made to steal my horses. Men are sometimes murdered by those with whom they are travelling, and with whom they have broken bread, an act of treachery happily uncommon, and one that is condemned with universal consent as an infamous deed. It would probably be commited without premeditation through an access of covetousness arising from a sudden temptation to take possession of wealth displayed in a careless manner, and then only when resistance was offered to the thief, who might fear the loss of his own life through his desire for gain.

While the coffee is being consumed during the cooking operations of the women, the scent of food is carried by the evening breeze to the men in *menzul;*

the odour is strong, the Bedawin like it. Men, who are in the habit of carrying about their persons goats' dung for a perfume, are not likely to be possessed of a very delicate organ of smell. As the meat is seething in the pot, the whole of the inside of a sheep, which is unfit for food, is thrown on the fire, owing to the Bedawy notion that it imparts a special flavour to the meat that is being cooked above it. The strength and pungency of the smell, proceeding from the burning entrails, fills the camp and spreads itself over a considerable distance beyond. An acquired taste is necessary to appreciate the humours of a nomad dwelling, and a strong appetite that has been promoted by a long ride after a very slight breakfast will be required for the supper.

The clapping of hands summons the guests, a servant, if the meal is in a rich sheikh's house, appears with water for the distinguished guest (2 Kings iii. 11) to wash his hands, and rinse his mouth, before and after meat. All then squat round the trencher according to their rank, the principal guest occupying the post of honour near the hearth, and next to the chief. The servant stands before his master, never leaving his presence except to do his bidding; his eyes are fixed on his features to see if he can anticipate his wishes. Every glance is recognised, and its meaning interpreted, without the semblance of a command. A slight wave of the hand indicates the desire of the master for the servant to look after the welfare of the guests, and he moves rapidly but silently from one to another as bread and water are required during the meal (Ps. xxxii. 8, and cxxiii. 2).

A large tray containing a pile of rice, garnished with huge lumps of meat, over which has been poured with

a generous hand a quantity of melted butter ("*samny*") is brought into the tent for the guests. After repeating the formula "*Bismillah*" (*i.e.* "In the name of God") with outstretched hands, the men begin to enjoy themselves, squeezing the rice in one hand and turning it with their fingers until it is like a ball, then throw it into the mouth, one following another in rapid succession. The meat is torn asunder and sent after the rice, while bread follows in bits after it is broken. Whenever a succulent morsel appears, as a mark of esteem it is placed before a neighbour or in his mouth. I always carefully avoided the polite attentions of the men that were next to me, and diligently copied their methods without being able to keep their pace. It was enough for me to appease my hunger, and show that I appreciated the supper. As long as there is anything left men are called to eat, to eat indeed—they simply gorge till nothing remains. One man is capable of stowing away from two to three pounds, and even more if his fast has been severe. Discomfort often follows a great supper, but if a suggestion was made to a man suffering from indigestion, that he should eat less, he would repel it with scorn, and reply that indigestion was preferable to moderation.

All kinds of meat are generally boiled in a pot over a fire of thorns (Ps. lviii. 9), the whole of the fat of the animal being put into it that nothing might be wasted; but the most famous dish, for a feast or honoured guest, is a lamb or kid, tender and good (Gen. xviii. 7), stuffed with rice and roasted whole over the ashes of a fire in a pit covered with earth.

Corn is ground in the domestic mill by two women (Matt. xxiv. 4) and round thin cakes are baked on an iron pan over the fire or in the ashes on the hearth,

GRINDING CORN.

BAKING BREAD.

as required for immediate use (Gen. xviii. 6), and frequently turned to be thoroughly well done (Hosea vii. 8), or they will partake of the nature of soft leather; if they were left to grow old, even the length of a day, "soft leather" would be a term altogether inadequate to describe them.

There is no corn in the wilderness where sand and stones profusely cover the land; even the pastures for camels are slight and sometimes fail. Food is therefore scarce and meat is seldom eaten. The camel provides for the wants of the desert ranger, and supplies him with all the food he needs. Before the meal begins milk is offered to the guests, whose capacity for food is equal to the best of their race, but opportunities are less frequent for indulgence. Four pints is not an uncommon amount for a man to drink at a time—if he can get it. He is inured to abstinence and it is surprising how little is required to maintain life, and on this account it would be uncharitable to admonish him for enjoying a feast in his own way, when he is fortunate in being invited. An animal may be killed to prevent its dying a natural death; this, and the sacrifices that are offered are the only opportunities the nomad of the farther East and South has for eating meat. Milk is the staple food, and a dish of butter milk and butter mixed is often all that is provided for a meal. Fresh milk is rarely drunk, except in the hottest season of the year, when the drought causes a poor supply, it is then eagerly seized as it is brought into the tent, but it is generally put into skins kept for its sole use, and before it is drunk the skin is well shaken to impart a special flavour to the contents. Where it is obtainable roasted corn is eaten besides milk, and half-baked bread over which has been poured

some clarified butter. A kind of cheese churned from the froth on the milk, when first drawn from the animal, until it solidifies, is also a dish fit to set before any hungry man. The Arabs in the wilderness south of Palestine use camels' milk only for drinking purposes, goats' milk is reserved for cheese and butter. In the oases of the Arabian and Syrian deserts dates are grown. According to the district there is a supply of suitable food; however poor it may be, it is relished by the people whose lives it sustains; however meagre its supply it is enough for their needs.

The bare and uninteresting landscape with shifting sands that hide the desert tracks, with rocks that burnish in the setting sun, and a parched dry soil without even a ragged tree to break the monotonous stretch of country, is not an inviting prospect for a home. Mile after mile in sweltering heat and a blistering sun, where there is no human habitation, and apparently no form of life, through the loneliness and solitude of an empty wilderness, the nomad rides in freedom, as free as the air he breathes, and pitches his camp with his fellowship in a hollow or on the slope of a hill, almost out of sight: and even there an appropriate supply of food is found.

The most indispensable article in the wilderness is a "*kirby*," the water-skin, the bottle of Scripture (Genesis xxi. 15). It is used in various ways for many purposes; everything of a liquid nature is preserved in this receptacle, whether water or milk, for keeping in the tent or conveyance from one place to another. The greatest possible care must be exercised in the treatment of the *kirby*, it bears within its hide the life of the people; if it is not kept damp it will harden and crack, and through this slight surface the contents will

ooze and the precious liquid be lost. Hence the allusion in the Bible to "bottle in the smoke" (Ps. cxix. 83).

The skin of the goat is the only hide out of which a water-skin can be made. In the process of manufacture a semicircular slit is cut half across the quarters on the underside, with the tail for a centre, and the whole of the carcase drawn out of it; the slit is then sewn up and the skin salted and cured. The best skins are made without slitting; the breast-bone is broken and the carcase passed through the neck without cutting any part of the skin; the legs are then knotted together after cutting the lower skin of them into strips.

There are several methods of curing the skins, the best is with pomegranate rinds; three or four handfuls, according to the size of the skin, are thrown into water, which is allowed to soak in the skin, whose position is changed daily, so that all sides may be made damp. Fresh rind is put in every five days, and at the end of fifteen, the skin is cured. A little salt left in for three or four more days, then thoroughly well rinsed, will make the work more complete and the skin ready for use.

Every Bedawy knows how important it is for him to look after the skins and keep them in good order. His life may depend on the care he bestows on the *kirby*, as he moves his dwelling, or travels from place to place. When carried on the camel, the mouth of the skin is turned up to prevent its leaking; at noon when a halt is made for rest, the water-skins are removed and placed on some article to keep them off the hot sand, and protect them from the heat to prevent evaporation. During a journey the ropes by which the skin is fastened on the camel must be constantly examined, lest by an act

of carelessness or negligence they become loose, and the skin drops on the ground; its fall might cause it to be lost and the consequences disastrous.

Bedawin are not accustomed to go without water for more than half a day. They have never been taught to moderate their appetites either for food or drink. When necessity compels them to fast they philosophically resign themselves to the deprivation of food, but they cannot long endure the lack of water, nor exercise restraint when it is placed before them. An opportunity to eat or drink is never neglected and every one partakes liberally, willing to endure discomfort rather than leave anything for the morrow.

In summer, when the sirocco blows, this fierce hot wind with its scorching breath dries up every particle of moisture about a man, his mouth becomes parched and dry, and his tongue like a lump of leather feels too big for his mouth. He cannot exist without water, the bare idea would act upon him with a force that would prevent exertion, and in less than a day, if overcome by a fruitless effort to find it, he would lie down exhausted in a delirious sleep, and die without recovering consciousness. Stories innumerable have been related of the death by thirst of luckless wayfarers, whose water-skins had been depleted, and the track lost in the vain search for a well. Their bones have been found bleaching on the sands of the desert, after having been picked clean by vultures, that always seem to know when a meal is being prepared for them, and watch each faltering footstep beneath the withering sun, till the last step is taken, and the traveller sinks on the scorching sand to die. It is always fatal to leave the track, and it generally happens that the unfortunate wanderer has been overcome

A WOMAN CHURNING WITH *KIRBY*.

A WELL IN THE DESERT.

by thirst, and lost control over his sense of locality and instinct of self-preservation. Many are lost almost within reach of water. They missed the track. It does not matter how near they happened to be; having missed it, they were lost.

In winter it is possible to endure thirst for a longer period, and in this season of the year water is more abundant, more easily preserved, and there is less danger of loss. Wells very naturally occupy a prominent place in the economy of nature. On that account they offer the most fruitful source of disagreement. Water is absolutely necessary for the preservation of life and every tribe requires for its maintenance a sufficient supply. Disputes between contiguous tribes more frequently arise through the desire for possession of a watering place than any other cause. Hospitality is freely offered when the clans live on amicable terms, both food and water being distributed generously and a tribe and its cattle received at the well of another with a hearty welcome, until some incontinent person asserts his claim on behalf of his people for right of possession in a moment of irritation. All liberal principles are forgotten in the covetousness displayed, and an appeal to arms follows the dispute. I remember the recall of a mutaserif of Jerusalem through the mismanagement of a dispute about a well between two Bedawin tribes on the south of Gaza. As they lived under the jurisdiction of the Turkish Government, the Governor of Jerusalem interfered on hearing of their difference of opinion. He went first to one sheikh, and from him received a bribe to protect his interests, then to the other whose generosity was also accepted, then he returned home with his presents without settling the affair in favour of either

of the tribes. Both chiefs regarded the matter as having terminated in their favour, by virtue of the promises made by the corrupt official, and proceeded to take possession. They met, each with an armed force behind him, and the feud became so acute that blood was shed on both sides. Meanwhile news of their rupture was sent to Jerusalem, and a request was made for the intervention of the authorities by residents of Gaza interested in the combatants. The military governor of the province, who is responsible for the maintenance of peace, soon appeared with a troop of soldiers, prepared to quell the disturbance, and administer the requisite chastisement on the aggressors. He called for the two principal sheikhs, and as only one responded to his invitation he decided that his tribe should be regarded as the owners of the well, and proceeded to inflict punishment on the other tribe.

The same difficulties arose in the time of the Patriarchs (Gen. xxi. 25-32), and on one occasion at least matters were settled in a more peaceful way, Abraham, the Hebrew, being able to induce Abimelech to restore the well "so violently taken away" by his people. No change has been wrought since Abimelech's men forcibly seized the well belonging to another tribe. When terms have been arranged and a covenant made between one tribe and another, as in the days of Abraham, it is still ratified by gifts, and concluded with a feast (Gen. xxvi. 28-33).

There is another form of hospitality which engages the attention of the Bedawin, their treatment of foreigners as well as strangers of their own race, and it is important that every traveller should have some acquaintance with their customs before he ventures into the desert, the greetings to offer, the right answers to give, and to

behave with that courtesy which he expects to receive. Rules for daily intercourse extend even to matters of supreme importance, to events that lead to the disturbance of peace, and the declaration of war. Passion uncontrolled may lead to vengeance involving whole families, and tribes, in serious consequences, but acts which follow outbursts of temper are all governed by their own laws. The Bedawin are acquainted with almost every device of the human heart, and account for them is taken into consideration by habits that have grown into customs which have been established for generations. They have rules for guests, methods of dealing with enemies, habits of mind, and usages of nature, which enable them to ascertain without much difficulty the demeanour of strangers. If two men meet at night they never pass very near each other, and do not salute as in the day time. Should one try to approach, the other will call out: "*Kune wulla sahib*" —"Friend or foe"; the reply will of course be, "Friend," and he will receive the answer: "Go your way, night knows no friends!". A doubtful acquaintance met in a town will usually be passed with the ordinary salute, but if his hand is offered, it is taken and held, until the greeting is over and they separate.

In travelling through the country all who do not belong to the wilderness should seek the hospitality of the tribe through whose territory they pass. It may be obtained in the form of an escort and guide by asking the chief for a man. The traveller will then be under the protection of the tribe represented by the guide, who recognises the responsibility for his safety, and any act of faithlessness would be a disgrace to his people, as well as himself. The traveller is his "ward," and "way-

fellow," "*rafik*," and he who abandons his *rafik* is despised by all honest men, those who have any regard for the life of their guest, and the honour and prestige of their tribe. There is a general respect for the *rafik* by all with whom he comes in contact, which grows according to the power of the tribe pledged to protect him; unfriendly tribesmen are aware that retribution will follow them if he is molested, and compensation demanded for the loss of his goods. For all this care he must pay; the price will depend on the danger of the undertaking, and the hazardous nature of the journey; a larger sum is always asked than the way-fellow need give, a bargain therefore is made, and will be kept on the part of the guide and escort. When the country is in a state of disturbance, or the Turkish government more vigilant, for a short journey it is possible to agree to terms in Jerusalem before the English consul, and state them in writing. This will be accepted by the Ottoman authorities, if the tribe with the right of escort has charge of the traveller. Without this guarantee it will be necessary to obtain permission of the Turkish governor of the province, and he will, if he grants the request, send a soldier, with directions to see that the traveller obtains very little knowledge of the country, and a very slight acquaintance with the people. My experience of Turkish rule has been somewhat unfortunate, although I cannot reasonably complain, as I travelled in their country without their authority, but my dealings with the people of the land were always satisfactory. When I entered the Hauran from the South in 1893, I crossed from Amman to Salkad[1] by a new route hitherto untraversed, and my

[1] See paper in *R. G. S. Journal.*

servants were so frightened at the prospect, they refused to proceed beyond the Zerka without an escort. After some difficulty, and prolonged negotiations, the Circassians of Amman sent two of their chief men with us. Although not actually engaged in warlike operations against the Druzes, there was enmity between them; blood had been shed on both sides; my escort was, however, received with the same hospitality extended to me, in the guest chamber of Salkad.

Amongst the ruined villages in the Belka, recently occupied by the wandering tribes, a watchman stands on a housetop looking towards the wilderness. One day whilst I was standing with him, he saw in the horizon a number of horsemen, and drew my attention to them before I could ascertain the reason why he was interested in their movements. At first I thought there was a "*ghrazzu*," and a fight was imminent. If their intentions were hostile, he said, it would be on account of some deed of blood committed by a member of the community, and the affair might be arranged without recourse to arms; they were not riding as raiders. As they seemed to turn in our direction, he called to the men in the guest tent; they quickly mounted their horses, and went to meet the visitors. The strangers immediately spread out in a long line, as a sign of peace, to enable the watchman to count them, and we easily saw they numbered thirteen. If their design had been hostile, no change would have been made in their movements, and the horsemen sent out to meet them would have asked the old question: "Is it peace?" (2 Kings ix. 17)—an onslaught would have been made upon them to save the camp, and a battle waged. The sign of their peaceful progress was received as their pledge, and the two com-

panies rode joyously together back to the guest tent, where the strangers were entertained in the hospitable manner of their race. They may be seen in the picture on the opposite page: their spears resting against the tent; their horses tethered by its side; and the watchman still looking across the desert for signs of friend or foe (Ps. cxxvii. 1; 2 Sam. xviii. 24).

3. Childhood and Youth.

The birth of a child is of little consequence unless it is a boy, woman's sex is despised by the custom of the wilderness people; it is even held in less esteem than that of a man in the Mosaic law, where for the birth of a "maid child" (Lev. xii. 5) the days of purification are twice the number enjoined for a boy. In an age when man lives by his sword, and the defence of his home rests on his strong right arm, the family must depend on him for its precarious existence. It is the man that controls its destiny, that upholds its honour, gives it a name, and maintains its right to fill a place in the history of the race. This arrangement is according to the exigencies of life, and appears to be the commencement of a process that has been nourished by a supreme power in the course of its development, until successive stages have revealed the spiritual force by which it grew into a more equitable form, and reached its highest sphere in the Divine appointment, that in Christ Jesus "there is neither male nor female". The contrast between the law "of old time," which Christ came to fulfil, and the complete realisation of its perfect attainment, is in the beginning, and the ending, of the revelation of God. The links in the chain of progress, that connect this glorious era with the rude, and barbarous, age which ne-

A GUEST TENT—*MENZUL.*

cessitated what is called the Mosaic dispensation, the first moral law, were forged in the history of God's people, as He taught by the mouth of His prophets, and were fashioned in the pages of His Word.

Man's need in primitive times is the instinctive cry now issuing from the heart of the Bedawy's wife for a "man child"; her joy and comfort are found in the birth of sons, on whose arm she may lean, in whose tent she may rest when their father no longer considers her suitable for the satisfaction of his desires, and turns to another mate for the fulfilment of his hopes.

The advent of a girl excites no particular attention, and little comment, except in the movement of the tribe on the "*rahla*," when it would be perilous to wait for the interesting event that is hourly expected, so it happens on the journey. The woman is gently lifted into a seat on a camel arranged for a sick person needing extra care. The migratory nature of the Arabs prevents the woman who is about to become a mother seeking the rest obtained in a civilised community, she must therefore acquire a courage and strength beyond the usual kind, for there is scarcely any leisure for comfort; even at home in the brief period of their settled life the affair is a matter of a few hours. As soon as the birth pangs have passed and her child has entered the world, the mother assumes her ordinary duties, listlessly at first, because of her natural weakness, but this is of short duration and passes with surprising expedition. She may be herding goats, or gathering the thorny shrub for firing, away from the camp, when overtaken by her travail; the women in her company act as midwives, and gently bear her, one on each side, as she slowly paces homewards; others willingly offer assistance as she

passes their worsted homes to her own abode. There is a womanly tenderness in the wild free life of the wilderness that is bestowed on all who suffer. It shows itself again in the display of their affection for very young children, and though the mother may leave them behind with their father, when she is compelled by the inexorable law of divorce to forsake his house, with apparent unconcern, the next wife undertakes the charge and puts no barrier between them. There is less notice on either side, but neither parent nor children forget their relationship, and the rude barbarian in his man's estate remembers the mother who bore him and provides her with a home when no other is available.

When a boy is born, friends offer their congratulations, and bring various presents according to their means. The gift of a sheep or a goat is the most acceptable form of their offering, and none but the poorest family would think of anything else; even they will not fail to make the customary oblation and show their respect for the dignity conferred on the mother of a man-child; some useful addition to the food of the household in the shape of grain or lentils or any other article of diet that sustains life, they will substitute for the life they cannot give.

The father sacrifices a sheep or a goat in ignorance of the law of God as recorded in the Old Testament (Lev. xii. 6), but with an idea that he has cause to be thankful, *if the child is a boy*, and this is the means adopted by his people for making an acknowledgment before Allah of the benefits they have received. The flesh of the animal offered in sacrifice is eaten in the assembly of guests after the manner of their fellowship and communion. Certain superstitious practices (see

p. 190) follow in some of the more illiterate and unintelligent families before the child is put to the mother's breast, but I have not found a similar custom amongst the Bedawin to the one so common in Fellaheen villages of Southern Palestine, of rubbing the child with salt, to which allusion is made in Ezekiel xvi. 4.[1] Its absence is one of those signal marks of difference between the ways of the two races in contiguous relationship.

No child is weaned before two years of age; desert mothers occasionally keep their offspring longer with them, because other food for the child is scarce, and this is the surest way of establishing its strength. A name is given without ceremony, to the boy one that expresses the quality most admired in man or beast, as "Fahed," the lynx, "Dhib," the wolf; to the girl, one they hope she might obtain in the course of her existence, "Selma," peace, "Hamdy," praise. Thus equipped the child is carried by its energetic mother, at her breast, slung on her back, or astride her shoulder, wherever she goes, tending the goats, seeking for pasture and driving them home at the close of the day. Children enjoy the rough and tumble life of the camp, gradually acquiring a knowledge of nomad life that will enable them to hold their own in the mischievous assembly of naked urchins that run about the tents. The boy wears no clothes in the desert. Nature provides for him, and his lithe and supple limbs grow in activity as his mind develops, and his fingers become acquainted with their purpose in life. The cold of the hills of the Moab plateau calls for clothing in the season when the wind blows in gusts, and the men shiver in caves, or crouch beside the embers of the fire in the *menzul*.

[1] See *Village Life in Palestine*, new ed., 1907, p. 107.

Bedawin children receive no instruction from their parents. Their instincts are cultivated somewhat after the manner of young animals, and their dispositions grow like the trees in nature's garden, without interference or training from man. They learn the common sayings of the tent, the expressions of their elders, and early in life they adopt the various stratagems of maturer years, copied unconsciously from the ways of grown folk, the lie being the chief means of evasion. No check is placed on their wilful desires by the parents, who rule only by entreaties; public opinion is their censure, expressed at times in vigorous speech; no hand being raised for chastisement. Girls are often wayward, and boys soon become independent of parental control, despising their mother's voice as readily as they escape from their father's curse.

They have few games besides chasing each other over the sandy hillocks outside the camp, or over the ropes of the tents. Though the Arab nature is savage the Bedawin are never brutal. Boys play at horses without strife or disagreement; if passion shows itself in a childish quarrel, it never gets beyond a war of words; no blows are exchanged in a mimic fight. On moonlight evenings boys and girls play together; a chorus of older girls with clapping hands gathers on some slight eminence outside the camp, older lads join the company and help them in a refrain or single verse of a monotonous chant, till they are weary, and rest is sought for the night.

After childhood there is no pastime among the people, even riding is never undertaken for exercise, it is always by way of necessity; no Bedawy can understand why anything should be done for amusement,

life is too serious and exertion too irksome. An exception is made to this rule of life at a feast, which is an occasion that demands an appropriate regard for its observance, quite independent of the ordinary conception of pastime and play.

Circumcision.

The usual age for circumcision is from five to seven years, no religion ceremony accompanies the rite, as in the case of the Jews, it is, however, kept with great care in every camp, and with boisterous mirth and merry-making. Differences appear in the manner of its observance in many tribes; there is a feast, and sacrifices are offered in all; but minor details vary according to locality and circumstances.

In the desert no man is capable of performing the operation required for the fulfilment of the law, some one must therefore be brought from a distance, generally a barber, who is accustomed to the use of sharp instruments and the practice of surgical arts.

All the boys of the camp whose ages are within the prescribed limits are collected and placed in a tent. Families interested in the event and their friends gather in large numbers to hold high festival in their honour; herdsmen from the field find it a suitable occasion for an immoderate gaiety of manner, an opportunity to give vent to their long-pent-up feelings; horse racing, and gun firing, and dancing, form a part of the programme of the proceedings. All apparently enjoy themselves, except the boys in the tent, whose share in the business of the day consists in making as much noise as their fears suggest, while a crowd of women surround their place of retirement, and in shrill notes drown the cries

of the terrified boys within. In this tent they remain for a week after the operation, under the gentle care of their mothers, whose hearts are touched with tenderness for their sons. Outside the house of hair the feast continues, and gifts are presented by friends to the parents of the boys, on whose behalf the revelry is made, and these seem to be the passport to the general joy. The chief part of the entertainment is the supper. Many of the guests will have seen no meat for a considerable period, and the scanty fare of their daily life, insufficient at times to assuage their hunger, tempts them to linger at the board, and make the best use of their invitation to enjoy the pleasures of the feast; the best is an immoderate use of their opportunity, for which they willingly suffer from some future uneasiness and probably a severe attack of indigestion.

An intelligent boy soon learns to make himself useful, and at eight years of age is ready to enter on the serious business of life. Sheep and goats and camels, the property of the clansmen and wealth of the tribe, have to be herded. With very rare exceptions every boy begins to work in the same way, looking after the cattle of his family. At first he goes with his mother to look after the goats, too young to leave her; later on, when her control no longer keeps him at her side, he follows his father, or a friend, and learns to find the best grazing grounds, to see the camels do not stray, and bring them to water, every three days in summer, and in winter at longer intervals. As watering is a tedious business, the different owners generally manage to meet the herdsmen on these days at the wells, and help them to water their camels. They see that all is well with their animals, and return home satisfied that no mishap has caused

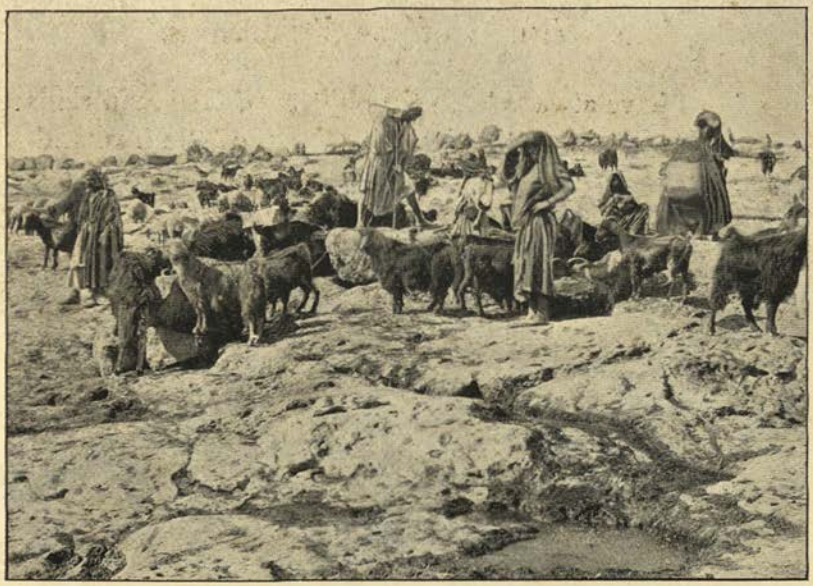
any loss, either by accident or raid. This is a constant source of anxiety to the owners, and to the herdsman a positive danger, as he might be killed by the raiders to prevent his raising an alarm, and causing pursuit to be made before they could make good their escape. While out with the herd he lives chiefly on camels' milk, and bread, with a little roasted corn which he prepares as required. His leisure time is occupied in playing the flute, knitting camels' wool or twisting goats' hair (spun by the women) into ropes for use, or sale, according to the market. His wages depend on the number of camels in his charge. Each owner for whom he herds gives him one male baggage camel per annum, besides food and clothing. In this way he accumulates a herd of his own, or if he is a shepherd one lamb of every ten born in the year is the payment made to him. A herdsman is ambitious, for no man is counted in the numbering of the tribe who cannot carry a sword and serve it in war (2 Sam xxiv. 9); nor is it possible to gain in wealth without the "ghrazzu". His own flock grows, his cattle increase, he purchases a share in a mare and marries a wife. And thus he becomes a fighting man of his people and establishes a home in his tribe.

In the Belka there are few camels, but sheep and goats are plentiful as in the day when the King of Moab paid tribute to Israel (2 Kings iii. 4). A new source of revenue is increasing the wealth of the nomad race; peasants from the hills of the west till the soil for their Bedawin masters, and receive a share of the produce for the labour they spend on the field. When the corn is carried to the threshing floor, a new danger is added to the number in the wilderness life, a new temptation is offered to the tribes that value the produce of the earth. Thresh-

ing floors have always been the objects of Bedawin raids (*cf.* 1 Sam. xxiii. 1), the threshing floors of the husbandmen of Palestine, now the men who have raided others have to defend their own. When the grain is removed by its owners from the threshing floor it is stored in pits on the hills until it can be conveyed to market, or sold direct to merchants who remove it under an escort of the tribe.

Women and children herd the goats in the Belka, and youths look after the sheep near the settlement, till they are strong enough to take them to the higher grounds of the country. More care is required and greater vigilance is necessary in the distant pastures where the wild beasts seek their prey. A sheep may be seized by a wolf and carried off, before the negligent shepherd is aware of his loss. The wandering sheep is always in the greatest danger.

No feature of country life offers so rich a field for the Bible student as the pastoral scenes in which the old Patriarchs were engaged during their sojourn in the land of Canaan. Picturesque details of the industrious side of nomad life, that which deals with cattle, vividly recall the occupation of the fathers of Israel. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all flock-masters, moving with their herds in search of pasture, pitching their tents for a time in one place and then in another. It is in the succeeding ages that these scenes were used as illustrations for the proclamation of spiritual truths. The inspired Psalmist is the first to attribute a spiritual significance to shepherd life in Psalms xxiii. Its distinctive features are enhanced by greater truths in the lessons of Jesus Who came as "The Good Shepherd". The calling, leading, feeding, keeping and every



WATERING THE GOATS.

WOMEN OF THE TENT.

other part of His work, so intimately bound up with the truths He conveyed, are fresh and luminous,[1] and shepherd life, in all its tender associations with the teaching of Jesus, is a picture of rare beauty, set in a frame of the wild and undeveloped character of the men of the East, who were as ignorant in Patriarchal days as they are to-day of the sublime truths their simple life conveyed by the Divine word. Strange yet wholesome thoughts are suggested by comparing the Old Testament record of shepherd life and the New Testament teaching concerning it. The contrast between the real as seen in the life of the nomad herdsman and the ideal as shown in the life and teaching of "The Good Shepherd" is the evidence of Supernatural Power (John x).

The assistance Moses gave to the daughters of Jethro in watering their fathers' flocks (Ex. ii. 16, 17), the incidents in the life of Jacob recorded in Genesis xxix. 10, the occupation of his sons, and their evil practices, are common occurrences to-day. They serve to show the natural ways of man's living. It is the elevation of character, and spirituality of life inspired by the Spirit of God, that make manifest the progressive revelation of His will to man.

The herdsman's grossness is never out of the Semitic nature; in his soul there is an eagerness for increase of substance in the growth of his flock, through its subsistence on the food of the pastures, and the procreation of its kind (Gen. xxx. 25-43); and in the soul there is a degradation arising from the baser thoughts of association with the proper increase of the herd, so often shown among Eastern nations who defiled the land

[1] See *Village Life in Palestine*, new ed., 1907, p. 163.

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(Lev. xviii. 23-25). The nomad offence of lying with cattle (Lev. xx. 15), the lewd conversation of the men employed in looking after them (Gen xxxvii. 2), depict the ordinary features of pastoral life.

When the men are not herding, their time is spent in the camp. They sit all day at home in a lazy fashion without occupation. Their talk takes the colour of their environment, being controlled by convention, they are unable to lift themselves above the petty conversation of personal details which are so inane and so wearying. Their minds are alert, and they have a keen eye for particulars, but they are incapable of abstract thought. At any moment news might reach them from herdsmen in the field that a raid has been made on their camels, and it will be necessary to start in pursuit. Living under arms they are ready for any emergency; it is this state of alarm, and the duty it involves, which disturb the least contemplative effort, and furnish an insurmountable obstacle to serious study. Nature in its nakedness lies open before them. They see its grosser side but nothing of its beauty. It has no form nor comeliness in their eyes, nothing attractive but its increase. There is no difference in their feelings after their own kind, no evidence in the meaner sort of higher motives. In all their stories no allusion is made to the beauty of their women; in their conversation they never even mention them. Instinct subdues all reference, because it provokes all their passion.

When girls are sent to herd the goats, and sheep, a man will accompany them to protect them from injury, driving the flock out at early dawn, letting them browse on the way till they reach the high ground where the pastures are richer, till sunset warns them of approaching

darkness, and the need to return to camp where the animals are milked. There are various reasons why a girl should not be left alone. She may be carried off by a wandering Bedawy if she is approaching the age to marry, or an attack might be made on a straying animal by some formidable beast of prey, attracted by a large number of goats and sheep collected together, and she would be unable to drive it away.

Every evening they are brought into camp; every morning they are watered at the well; camels remain away for days, and are taken to water twice a week in summer and after a more protracted period in winter. These animals arrive at the wells early in the morning, and remain there till the middle of the afternoon. Watering is a long and fatiguing business, and the herdsman who has been alone on the hills for three days is anxious to hear news from his home; the owners of the cattle meet him occasionally to assure themselves of the safety of their property, but this more often happens if disquieting rumours of a raiding party have disturbed the repose of the wandering village. The camels need a rest after a heavy drink, and thus a time of recreation is offered to the company of men who have met at the watering place, and they take advantage of it to exchange their items of news. The Bedawin are most inveterate gossips, retailing every little bit of a conversation they have casually heard, not always in the way of its utterance, but what they cannot exactly remember they invent, and embellish it, for the benefit of a willing listener.

Camels are all branded both with the mark of the tribe (called the "*wusm*") and that of the owners. The former are well-known to the desert inhabitants, having been by long-established custom the representative sign

of the clan: the proprietor's mark is not so easily remembered because of the additions made by successive owners. Sometimes a camel, the victim of many raids, and therefore the property of many people, is like a stalking map. The *wusm* or mark of the tribes is a simple character, probably necessitated by the exigencies of life, rather than the feeble imagination of the people. Each sign has a distinctive name but their origin is obscure, even the Bedawin are unable to account for them, and certainly none of them know when they were first used. Rocks and remains of buildings in their old dwelling-places are scored with them, and the identification of these tribal marks agrees with the history of Arab immigration. Some of the signs resemble the ancient Himyarite alphabet and it is interesting to find tribes in the Belka still preserving unconsciously these remnants of their past history in this simple fashion. Any old piece of iron is used, and this no doubt accounts for the limitation of the varieties of design. The *wusm* of the Wulid Ali is , the Rawalleh , and the Beni Sakhr ؟ ; a family in one of these tribes may adopt as its sign, a dot, or line, or some variation equally trifling, added to the tribal mark.

The first mark placed on the camel is the *wusm* before it has reached the age of twelve months, then the owner's sign, and before it has reached maturity it may be scarred all over its body. As these marks, made by a hot iron, naturally remain, they are no proof of actual ownership, because a new one is added whenever the animal has exchanged hands. They show that the camel has been in the possession of certain people, but the only one who has a reliable claim is he who holds

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the beast. The previous history, established by the signs on the animal's body, assists the tribesmen engaged in seeking a reconciliation between two contending parties, but they do not consider them sufficient evidence of a claim by one man for the restitution of his property; they help them to decide the assessment of the value of the number of camels stolen in a raid. But camels obtained in this predatory manner are usually sold at a distance, to men unlikely to satisfy the original owners with a sight of their lost cattle. Although the Bedawin are quick to discern the camels once in their herd, and greedily urge their restoration, resorting at times to arms to emphasise their request, there is no disgrace attached to their theft. Stealing is not an offence, but a business, the vocation of every full-grown man. The nomad law is with the owner, and he may protect his property, and if a thief is driving off his camels he may shoot him, after calling on him to stop, should he continue to assert his new proprietorship by going on his way.

4. Dress and Fashion.

Every true son of the desert wears a long white inner garment, with sleeves that run to a point more than a yard in length, the distinguishing mark of the fighting man. The peasant's sleeves are short, and narrow, and this alone will establish the difference between the tiller of the soil, and the man of war. When the Bedawy prepares for battle, he ties the two long sleeves into a knot, and throws them over his head around his neck out of the way. His right arm is then bare and free; and in this custom we have a practical illustration of the passage of Scripture in Isaiah lii. 10, "The Lord

hath made bare His Holy arm," showing that God was ready to take action on behalf of His people.

A significant allusion is made to the colour of the inner garment in the words of Psalms lxviii. 14, where there is a reference to multitudes of slain being "as white as snow in Salmon," the white garments of the warriors as they lay in heaps on the ground resembling a field of snow, a sight frequently seen during the Soudanese war by the British troops.

Over the white shirt a large rough cloak is worn, brown and white, or black, if the wearer is a man of means. It will also be ornamented round the collar with gold or silver thread. Between the ordinary inner garment, the "*beredan*," and the outer one, "*abyah*," a coloured "*kombaz*" similar to that of the townsman is usually worn as a mark of distinction. The sleeves are wider than in the article of the town, and in all probability this part of the man's outfit is the "coat of many colours" as it is termed in the Authorized Version of the Bible, and in the Revised Version a "garment with sleeves," and in the original means expansive and wide.

The "*coat of many colours*" (Gen. xxxvii. 3), as a token of esteem and mark of honour, is always given by the Turkish Government to a sheikh. It is sometimes conferred by a father on a son, in a way which indicates a preference, that is less pleasing to his brethren than the recipient of the favour. It is not merely a sign of parental affection, but denotes the father's intention to promote his son to a higher position than that which is occupied by the rest of his family. While the eldest son may naturally expect to succeed his father as the chief of his tribe, a younger son can by his father's will occupy the

place of honour, if he is regarded as the most capable head.

Subsequent events proved that the Patriarch Jacob's estimate of his sons was correct. The one whom he distinguished by a "coat of many colours" or "garment with sleeves" was most worthy of his esteem. Unless the merit of the adopted heir is conspicuous, and he is sufficiently powerful to maintain his position of authority, his succession will be disputed, and in some cases the tribe is broken up into factions, each governed by a son of the old chief, who can raise a company of adherents. This happened in the tribe of the Beni Sakhr. Before the old chief Satm died some years ago, he relegated his authority to a younger son, and the jealousy which had been provoked by the appointment burst into open rebellion on the death of the aged ruler.

Disappointed and angry brethren do not always wait for the decease of their father. The obstacle to their preferment, and the object of their hatred, is removed in an unlawful way, when a suitable opportunity occurs, as in the case of the sons of Jacob (Gen. xxxvii. 27). In the "Parable of the Vineyard" the heir is recognised by his appearance, and treated in a similar manner for another and different reason.

A Syrian money belt is often used as a girdle in the Hauran, but in addition men also wear one of leather, with shoulder straps which cross the breast. To this belt is attached on the right side under the arm an iron hook, which is used both to rest the gun when loading it, and to hold the powder-horn, an article made of wood and covered with leather, the shape of a ram's horn.

Some Bedawin also wear on the right side a strap on

which are generally hung two reeds, closed with a plug of felt, in which they carry powder when they do not possess a larger receptacle. Instead of reeds some have short tubes of brass, which answer the same purpose. Others wear as many as eight, and even more, of these tubes, in a pouch made like a cartridge belt. In addition, a small bag hangs from the girdle containing tinder, flint and steel, the last article being fastened by a chain; and on the left side another bag for odds and ends, scraps of leather, a needle and thread for repairing the different articles connected with the girdle, the most important part of a man's outfit.

All retire to rest in their garments, the girdle being the only article of clothing that is removed, and it remains attached to the person but in such a way that the Bedawy is free, his raiment loose, and he is then apparently most true to his natural disposition.

The sword, in every horseman's hand, walking or riding, is suspended from the neck by a cord; the herdsman carries a knife in his belt. The best weapon is a little curved, with a simple cross hilt wound about with metal wire. The wearer knows its temper, and the most effectual stroke. In the hand of a strong and expert swordsman, the backstroke will sever the head from the body; he always tries, if he cannot get in this cut, to draw his weapon through the wound he makes; a simple hatchet stroke he thinks but feeble.

An old flicklock gun with a long barrel is still found among the tribes, but many of the nomads have been armed with a rifle, and the long lance with its plume of ostrich feathers is fast disappearing. A supplementary armoury of pistols and a curved dagger bristle from the belt, and a fully armed man is like a small arsenal.

In the description of the "armour of God" (Eph. vi. 13-15) the girdle is of the utmost importance. While it may not be easy to determine with accuracy the resemblance between the parts of the armour specified in this description, and the virtues with which they are compared, we know that the girdle furnishes a support for the body when the wearer is in action, and keeps the parts of the armour in their proper place, and believe the girdle of truth is necessary to give consistency and stability to the character and conduct of the man.

Immediately on rising from sleep the Bedawy girds up his loins by fastening the girdle round his waist, above his long white inner garment (*cf.* Eph. vi. 14; 1 Peter i. 13; Luke xii. 35).

The head-dress is composed of several articles, sometimes a white skull cap is worn, over it a white kerchief and above both a *kufyieh* or shawl varied in colour and quality according to the taste and means of the wearer. This is kept in position by a fillet of goats' hair called *aghal.* The *kufyieh* is very useful; when drawn across the face it conceals most effectually the features of the man who desires to remain unknown in an adventure where identity might involve extreme danger to the one who undertakes the risk attached to it. Large red or yellow riding boots complete the costume of a mounted Bedawy. By his side he carries a sword and pistol, even a revolver may be in the possession of a sheikh; a gun slung at his back and a long lance in his hand. A poor unmounted Bedawy wears sandals, sometimes his feet are bare. Leather belts and sandals are made in Maan on the Hadj Road, riding boots come from Damascus or Jerusalem.

There is no uniform fashion in the way they cut and

dress their hair. It varies according to locality, and there are dandies even in the desert. Younger men especially are inclined towards a respect for their appearance, often carrying a small mirror in the folds of their head-dress, or fastened to it by a string, and it then serves the double purpose of ornament and use. At every available opportunity, without a blush, the young man gazes at his face in the looking-glass, stroking the down on his chin to make himself believe he has grown a beard. A great many shave their heads entirely: some wear their hair long in two small plaits called "horns" that hang down by the side of the head, this is the fashion amongst the Bedawin of the Hauran and the desert of Arabia; others leave it unkempt, and if it curls it may hang about their faces, so that a bearded man is a hairy man, like Esau. Beards are trimmed, and when care is taken of the personal appearance the Bedawin of Eastern Palestine are very handsome, being less swarthy than the men of the desert beyond the Moab plateau.

Until a woman is married her hair is cut across the forehead in a fringe. When she becomes a wife it is parted down the middle, drawn back on each side of the forehead, and plaited into five or six plaits. All women dress in a voluminous array of cotton cloth, dyed in indigo blue, the inner garment, called *tobe*, resembling in shape that worn by the men, but larger and longer, more material being used for the costume. It even drops in folds, before and behind, so that a woman must push it in front with her feet as she walks. This causes her to step in a graceful manner and gives her a very dignified appearance. The veil is of the same material and of like dimensions, and whenever a native of Moab wanders far from home she is easily recognised by her dress.

The women of Palestine are not in the habit of changing their costumes with the season of the year, or the fashion of a new place of residence. When Ruth the Moabitess removed to Bethlehem she would doubtless retain her national dress by which she was apparently known, as her name implied. And when Boaz said, "Bring hither thy vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it: and when she held it he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her" (Ruth iii. 15), she would experience no difficulty in complying with his request.

The veil is drawn under the chin and one side of it is tucked into a band of blue cloth bound round the head, corresponding to the *aghal*, a part of which is sometimes embroidered with yellow or red thread.

They have few ornaments, except in a sheikhly family where there is wealth, and these articles of gold are cherished by the women both on account of their value and the additional attraction which is lent to their appearance. Nose rings are common, both of gold and silver (Isa. iii. 18-24); bangles are also worn on the ankles, and bracelets on their arms; when not of precious metal even brass or glass is used. Both *henna* and *kohl* are in constant use as medicines as well as for enhancing the appearance of the person. *Kohl* is said to strengthen the eyes and for this purpose both men and women in the desert rely on its efficacy. All women of Eastern Palestine tattoo their faces from the bottom lip downwards, the whole chin being covered with blue marks.

According to locality and condition of life, slight variations are made by certain tribes in their manner of dress, but all the above-mentioned articles are in universal use, alterations are generally additions, and depend on means, or the favour offered to the attractions

of the itinerant merchant who travels from camp to camp to sell his wares, or the bazaar of some town visited at rare intervals by the Bedawin who have something to sell.

Children, when small, in a camp of the desert wear no clothes; when dressed they resemble their parents and look like small men and women with garments of the same pattern, differing only in size.

5. Marriage and Morals.

Blood runs hot in the East, and marriage is a safety-valve of unusual importance where children belong to the father, and women are necessary for replenishing the stock and adding to the honour of the family. Care is bestowed on the welfare of the race, and the maintenance of the home, not through any regard for the principles of morality, which meet with no consideration where there is no understanding above the beasts that perish, but in order that the tribe may increase, and the family merit the esteem and envy of the other members of the clan. In an encampment of Bedawin everything that happens is known to all, most of the people are related to one another, intrigue is therefore well-nigh impossible, and even useless, where facilities for divorce and remarriage are so common that a man more often changes his wife than his clothes. Under these circumstances it is scarcely worth his while to have more than one wife at a time, the slightest disagreement, or even caprice, will be reason enough for a Bedawy to get rid of her. It would appear from this apparent indifference to a serious consideration of the claims of the woman for recognition as a partner in a transaction on which the future happiness of the union depends, that she

derives no satisfaction from the arrangement. But the position she occupies, though degrading to the finer susceptibilities of modern civilisation, is not without compensation. It is bereft of all ideas of shame, probably because it is devoid of all sense of sin. Women may seem to be but the objects of man's desire, they are nevertheless the objects of his solicitude and care. Whatever they may do, they never forfeit the esteem of their sex, nor the appreciation of men generally, and never fall into the terrible state of infamy that is sometimes reached in the centres of civilisation. There are no abandoned women, no victims of man's vicious nature, left to die in hopeless misery, scorned by all who confess a woman gave them birth and nourished them with a boundless affection. Every woman is a wife, every woman has a home. She may have had more than one, when it has been exchanged by her own wilfulness or man's command, but it is absolutely impossible for her to be the occupant of two houses at the same time, or connected with two men without detection, which is immediately followed by a severance of her union with her first mate. The alteration of her position is merely a change of situation, without prejudice to her future, and without the loss of her son's regard and her family's affection, and she is never deprived of a house.

If an unmarried woman has lost her state of innocence through a guilty connection with an unmarried man the matter is easily adjusted by an immediate marriage, arranged with unusual despatch after the customary formalities (*cf.* Gen. xxxiv. 2, 8, 12). When a married woman wanders from the path of rectitude, her husband's honour requires reparation, and, unless her

paramour seeks an asylum beyond the reach of the sword of the injured husband, death follows; nothing less will meet the demands of justice. But in either case whether the woman is married or unmarried little blame is attached to her. She will doubtless be divorced from her first husband, but as this happens at the slightest provocation no slur is cast upon the erring wife. There are few women in a camp who have not been divorced for some reason or other, not always by their husband's wish, and seldom through their own fault. Another man is willing to take a woman who is thus separated from her husband, especially if she is a good goat herd, well able to superintend a home and qualified to undertake the duties of household management, which are so very considerable they generally mean doing all the work.

It is the husband's business to look after his wife, and this accounts to a great extent for the lenient treatment of a guilty woman, in cases of misconduct. And this feature of a rude age is another form of the responsibility attached to man for the support of his family and defence of his home. It is undertaken by the use of his sword, and is thus associated with the time when the moral law had not been given to inculcate moral principles, and restrain the acts of a barbarous people. How little civilisation really effects, without the true spirit of Divine guidance, may be seen in the awful degradation of the present day, where women suffer through the failure of man's responsibility for the maintenance of the sanctity of the home, and the purity of its daughters.

There are no illegitimate children in the wilderness, they all belong to the father and share his tent, and there is a healthy desire on his part to have a large

THE HOME OF A POOR MAN.

family; happy is the man that hath his quiver full, and as it holds seven, he has the assurance of riches that all appreciate. To attain this desirable position the chief of an important tribe will have more than one wife, sometimes more than is allowed by Mohammedan law, which evidently suited its precepts to the practices of the people for whom it was given, and encouraged their polygamous customs. In the confined space of a tent it might naturally be supposed there would be much disagreement and frequent domestic trouble. To prevent disturbance the eldest, or first wife, exercises a certain amount of supervision over the rest, the latest arrival being the favourite. If there is no more room for another spouse, either an extra tent is set up, or one of the wives is divorced by transfer to the establishment of one of the tribesmen; failing this amicable arrangement she goes to her relations until she is again sought in marriage. In order that a man with several wives may have a little domestic felicity, and his household affairs conducted on a regular plan, each wife takes her turn to wait upon her lord; this is called her "*dora*". While her *dora* lasts—at least one day and one night—each woman is anxious to prepare some appetising morsel for her husband, to secure his affection and favour, and every other wife holds aloof from her during that time.

The regularity of this rule is more honoured in the breach than the observance, the head of the family is subject to fickle humours, and his inconstant heart is governed by his mood. Very few men can really afford to maintain separate households, for that is what a number of wives would mean in a camp, and they are not always tractable. Because they occupy a subordi-

nate position and live in subjection, it does not necessarily follow that they are meek. A woman in a nomad dwelling can be fractious, and unwilling to share the divided affection of her husband, and she may compel him to divorce her. A Bedawy therefore learns in his youth that one wife is more than a man can easily manage, and is usually content with one at a time. Her influence is more real than any man will admit, and often for the sake of peace, and the preservation of his reputation as a man, he will submit to her persuasive rule. If she should chide, however gently, or exhibit a captious spirit, his neighbours will enjoy his discomfiture, the wandering villagers will look on their domestic quarrels with amusement, and the men in the *menzul* will obtain additional merriment at his expense, because no man likes to be regarded as the victim of a shrew, or incapable of asserting and maintaining his position as the lord of his *beit*, and his wife may be too valuable to lose, he is therefore unwilling to divorce her, despite her impatience with his efforts to rule, and her refusal to obey him.

All marry when they are very young, before they are out of their teens. Every parent is anxious to see his son settled in life, and when he is sixteen years of age, it is time to look for the first partner; the youth's thoughts turn to marriage, his eyes are fixed more steadfastly on the maidens, and they return his glances with a modest look that expresses nothing more than appreciation of his demeanour. The Bedawin differ entirely from all Mohammedan natives of Palestine in allowing their girls to accept or reject a proposal (*cf.* Gen. xxiv. 58). They are proud of this custom and look upon it as a distinction which proves their

superiority over the inhabitants of a town or settled village.

The most important part of the marriage proposal is the sum offered as dowry. It is not generally paid in cash, but in cattle, though the animals are not reckoned as the equivalent of the girl, but estimated according to their value, to furnish a sum of money equal to the price fixed. When jewels are included in the bargain it is a mark of distinction that belongs to the favoured few who are known to be rich (Gen. xxiv. 53).

As soon as a likely bride has been found, either through the advice of the elders, or the selection of the youth, negotiations are commenced between the parents. A cousin is by custom the most eligible bride, and a youth has the prior claim over all other suitors and their pretensions, if he chooses to demand her in marriage. In the discussion about the dowry the bridegroom seldom takes part, unless he is compelled to rely on his own efforts to obtain the requisite number of cattle, which varies according to the age, beauty, and rank of the girl. If she is young and of good family her price is high, and may be altogether beyond the means of the man who desires to possess her. A sheikh's daughter will command a large sum, represented by at least thirty camels. I was told in the camp of the Adwan that the young sheikh, Sultân, gave £1,000 for the daughter of the chief of the Rawalleh, but this was merely the nomad method of saying she cost more than usual. They can count their cattle in tens, but have no conception of numbers over 100; any figure above this is merely the adjectival equivalent of many.

In any case the maiden must be approached with a deference that is never shown to the daughters of the

Fellaheen, and both parents and suitor sometimes find that the capricious maiden has to be won before wed. When her sisters approach a marriageable age, and her domestic qualifications are inconsiderable and fail to attract attention, there is less difficulty in obtaining her consent than procuring a husband. Female charms consist of ability to perform all the offices of a household, and practically include the whole of the work of providing for the family. The man's business is to defend his home and property; his martial exploits, his reputation for courage, and his skill in the use of weapons, excite the admiration of the women.

Every girl expects to marry, and no doubt there is a time when she estimates her chance of a suitable choice; but time flies even where they take no account of it, and necessity compels those who are being left behind in the matrimonial race to accept what is offered.

There is a freedom in the camp due chiefly to the open life of its inhabitants, and attachments spring up through the intercourse allowed; they are of rare occurrence, owing to the absence of those higher qualities which are conspicuous in that condition of life where an incentive to virtue has produced a state of mind and heart capable of appreciating nobility of character. A natural modesty, the result of the protective influence of the men, and the vigilant attitude of the tribe, is an attribute of the nomad girls; on meeting a young Bedawy one of them will throw her veil across her face (Gen. xxiv. 65); as there is safety in numbers, a company of maidens will neglect this precaution, and readily laugh at his remarks, and return them with interest, more or less in harmony with the spirit of mischief that is sometimes found in their idea of amusement.

Young girls are occasionally betrothed while they are unable to understand the meaning of marriage, without their being consulted, and carried off to their new home before they are capable of exercising their choice. According to the customs of tent dwellers Rachel must have been a child when Jacob met her (Gen. xxix. 11), probably eight or nine years old, the seven years of service in lieu of dowry representing the period of time required for her to reach the age when she would be old enough to marry.

No ceremony is necessary for a wedding, a few questions may be asked and answered, in the presence of the families of the contracting parties, by way of emphasising the fact, and concluding the bargain. On the nuptial day the bridegroom gives a feast (Gen. xxix. 22), while the bride is removed to his mother's tent (Gen. xxiv. 67), where she is joined later by her youthful husband and the two remain in seclusion for eight days, or retire to the hills and live alone for a month. It is considered extremely indelicate for a woman to be seen for some time after her marriage. When the young couple return they may have to live for a while under the parental roof of the bridegroom while the young wife spins and weaves enough goats' hair to make the material for one of their own. Many girls prepare the tent before marriage, so that a bridegroom gets a bride and a home as well; few buy a tent as its costs £4 or £5.

None but an unscrupulous man would venture on the hazardous undertaking of substituting one girl for another, like Laban the Syrian, unless the helpless bridegroom had no one to take his part; his action would even then seem more like taking advantage of a situation than a desire to provoke a quarrel. Every

parent knows that the older the daughter the less the dowry, and the sympathy of his tribe would be with the man who was able to dispose of the cheaper first, especially if the higher sum had already been secured. This happened in the case of Jacob, who was unable to take his bride to his mother's tent, and apparently there was no one to look after his interests (Gen. xxix. 25, 26).

In the case of disagreement between husband and wife, the husband can divorce her. A more valid reason for getting rid of the wife is her failure to increase the family. If the wife has a serious complaint to make against the husband, she may leave his tent and take refuge with a relation or friend under the protection of his wife, until her father can be summoned. He can force her to return to her husband, or, better still, effect a reconciliation. Failing this amicable arrangement, on the determination of the woman to be divorced, her parents must return in full the amount of dowry they have received, and she is free to marry again immediately, if there is no evidence of child-bearing.

In the event of a man divorcing his wife without the legitimate cause of misconduct or barrenness, she has the right to carry away with her a camel load of her husband's property, in addition to anything she brought him on her marriage, but this privilege is lost through the divorce being necessary by any fault of her own.

It is remarkable how readily a woman will leave her children behind, marry another man and apparently care for his family by another woman. They are affectionate mothers, and it is difficult to understand how they can so easily abandon their offspring to which they are bound by the ties of natural affection. It is unfortunately true that a woman's chance of remarrying would

be considerably reduced if she wished to bring her former husband's children with her to her new home, but this only shows that maternal affection is less strong than the natural desire for marital intercourse, and is a proof that the people of the wilderness occupy a very inferior position in the scale of human life, being little higher than domestic animals who furnish the wealth of the tribe.

Mr. Jennings-Bramley in his account of the "Bedouin of the Sinaitic Peninsula," *Palestine Exploration Fund's Quarterly Statement*, July, 1905, page 214, relates the following incident in connection with this subject.

"Two years ago, when I was travelling down the Wady Araba, I was suddenly met by a man calling to me that Ali had been shot. I knew whom he meant. This Ali was the eldest son of Suleyman Ebn Shadêd, Sheikh of the Haiwat of the Nejemat tribe, and I knew of the trouble he was in.

"The Terabîn Arabs and the Haiwat have been friendly for generations, and a sort of offensive and defensive alliance exists between the two tribes. Ali, though a Haiwat, had been staying with the Terabîn, south of Ghaza. Another man of his own tribe was living there too, but had gone on a long journey. This man's wife and sister meanwhile were in the desert some way off, by themselves, minding the flocks. They were not seen for some time, and when the wife returned to camp, instead of going to her husband's tent, she took refuge in her brother's. Her story was that Ali had carried her off by force and taken her to the country of the Abgad, where they stayed together a month, when he tired of her and left her to find her way home as best she could. Meanwhile the husband had returned from

his journey, and Ali's position was a dangerous one. He, however, tried to evade the consequences of his act by declaring that he had never touched the wife, but had carried off the sister. No one had seen either for two months, and Ali's friends stuck to him, and, despite the wife's assertion that she was the woman, and the sister's denial, Ali succeeded in collecting so many partisans that, though public opinion ran high, he thought he had sufficiently proved his case to be out of immediate danger of the husband's revenge. He returned to his father's tent in the Haiwat country, and took things easy. One day as he was sitting outside his tent, smoking his pipe, a stranger rode up with his cloak drawn over his face, salaamed, and then the usual salutations passed between the two. The stranger's gun lay on the pommel of his saddle, pointing at Ali, and as he spoke he suddenly pulled the trigger—the bullet cutting through the fingers holding his pipe, passed through Ali's side, and lodged in the flesh of his back. The stranger—the woman's husband, of course—leaving him for dead, put spurs to his horse and galloped away, reaching the territory of the Teacha before his pursuers of the Terabîn could lay hands on him, and here they had to leave him unmolested for the time being, as the Teacha having taken his part, they were not in sufficient numbers to fight out the question.

"Ali's own story of the event was that his gun being at his side the stranger did not dare lift up his own from the pommel, lest, being warned by the movement, Ali had shot him. The bullet so injured Ali's fingers that he could not pull the trigger to shoot at the retreating man, and soon after loss of blood put him *hors de combat*. He nearly died of his wound, and while he was

laid up the two tribes attempted to end the matter by arbitration. It was proposed that Ali should pay 40 camels to the injured husband, not deducting any for the blood shed in revenge. This arrangement was refused both by Ali and his father, so that matters remained thus: any male relation on either side could, and should, kill any on the other side at sight. Ali, of course, being the one particular object of the revenge of the husband and his relatives, they would hunt him down, lurking about the hills until a good opportunity presented itself.

"However, after I left I heard that matters had been more peacefully settled. Ali was inclined to the expression of pious sentiments when I saw him. He told me that God always punished bad men, and exemplified the assertion by the fact that the man who shot at him had been somewhat seriously hurt by the recoil of his gun in firing. Now he sees the finger of God in the last event. The injured husband has died, and Ali, I am told, will marry the widow, and all will be well, and the two families at peace again!

"I remember asking some of the tribe what they would do supposing they knew Ali was being tracked. They said they would warn him, but not otherwise interfere; it would be his business to fight it out.

"In all this the woman is scarcely considered as culpable, and it is always so. If a man is caught with a woman, he can be killed by whoever catches him; there is no thought of punishing the woman; the only loss she incurs, if her husband divorces her in consequence of her misconduct, is that she must pay him what she cost him in the first instance."

6. Disease and Death.

"The death and the life are in the hands of Allah," say the Bedawin, and thus they illustrate their attitude towards the diseases of the desert. They believe they are always ailing, never quite well; but this complaint is merely a feeling of lassitude; and the hours of idleness spent in the lazy fashion of the nomad at home are the contributory cause, aggravated no doubt by their irregular supply of food, and the absence of restraint in eating and drinking. A long fast, borne with praiseworthy resignation, is frequently followed by the consumption of an inordinate amount of food at one meal. Indigestion follows as a natural consequence of rapid eating, and an over-full stomach. The powers of digestion are deranged through their organs being weakened, by having little to do, and while in that feeble condition an extra amount of work is demanded from them. This is the most frequent source of trouble, and may produce other forms of disease arising from it, and accounts for their believing they are continually unwell. Protracted periods of enforced fasting during their long journeys in the pure air of the wilderness, eventually enable the digestive organs to right themselves, and prepare for more sorrow, by a continuance of the practice of wild creatures, living without certain diet and drinking infected waters.

Diseases of the eyes, principally ophthalmia, are very common amongst the desert tribes. The bright sunlight, the long stretch of sand, which often reflects the sun's rays, affect the keen vision of the Bedawy who is continually looking over the country for signs of movement of man or beast. He depends on his long clear

gaze for the preservation of his life and property, and after a day in the glare of the sun, the chill air in the open tent renders him liable to eye sickness. Cleanliness is not a virtue with which he is acquainted, and the dust and sand and dirt that gather on his face are washed away by perspiration, or the water running from his eyes. He never bathes his person; it is well therefore that he should live in a tent that is prepared to receive the breezes that blow in the open country and across the hills; they clear the dwelling and cleanse the camp, but there are still left under the long robes of the nomads the irritating company that infest the unclean. Water is used for inward application, it is too precious to waste on the person. All believe that drinking from the *kirbies* at night before going to bed is the cause of eye diseases, and other ailments, but if a man is very thirsty he will drink an excess of water and trust in Allah. Probably he sleeps uncovered, and is chilled by the air of the cool night acting on the system which has already received a cold draught.

They bear with considerable patience the sufferings of their physical state, inured from youth to bodily fatigue and painful wounds. The alternating periods of enforced idleness in the camp, and the marvellous endurance displayed in their warlike operations at a distance from home, and the wounds they receive in the *ghrazzu*, show that they possess very strong and healthy constitutions. Aches in the limbs follow a night spent in the open wilderness, in the falling dew, after a long and toilsome journey; and in later years rheumatism attacks the men who have lived through this exposure and fatigue. The constitutional disturbance is slight, but the pain is often great, and heat

is applied to the affected parts for relief in extreme cases. Others suffer in silence, and hope, bearing patiently a painful malady, till old age creeps on, and the poor old decrepit frame slips away from earth. The condition of the aged is scarcely tolerable, weakness receives more contempt than pity, and sometimes old people when attacked by a fatal disease are left to die alone.

From fever the nomads suffer little. Epidemics are infrequent, though small-pox has decimated many a tribe. When it appears in a virulent form, it is recognised, and treated in a manner which shows the Arabs understand the necessity of separation to prevent infection. The patient is removed to a distance from the camp, and left, with a supply of food and drink, in the unskilled hands of a fellow-tribesman, who having suffered and recovered, they think he is not likely to be attacked again; and if he should catch it, well, he is used to it, and will have a better chance of living through a second seizure, becaue he has passed already a period of probation. If the isolated sufferer recovers, he washes himself, and the goat that kept him company to supply him with milk, or it is slain for safety; his clothes are burnt, and his friends provide him with a fresh costume in which he can return to the camp.

Every sickness is called "pain," and it is difficult for one who is not a medical man to discriminate between one kind of disease and another, except of the most obvious kind. They have little confidence in man, and will rather suffer than part with any money to pay for the advice of a physician, if one could be found in a distant town. The more enlightened who have had some experience of cities, and have heard of European doctors,

and their skill in the treatment of serious disorders, resort to them for help. I met a young sheikh of the Rawalleh some years ago, in the Hauran, conveying his sister, who was suffering from ophthalmia, to Damascus, to seek the aid of a European doctor.

Most of the nomads prefer in their dense ignorance the amulets of certain medicine men, who are willing to supply these papers, on which are inscribed the names of Allah, for a slight consideration. They are cheaper far than a tiresome journey, and a fee at the end of it; after being steeped in water they are swallowed, with a fervent wish for the satisfaction expected, and desired. I have known a man in Jerusalem use a prescription from a doctor in this fashion, although he was told what to do with it. The old ideas are not easily eradicated. Centuries of ignorance and superstition cannot be removed, or overcome, in a few moments, and incredulous minds are fain to lean on the simplicity of their faith. As all remedies, whatever form they take, come from Allah, one is as good as another, and in His hands they will live or die.

When a man appears sick unto death, a dread of the result will awaken in the nomads the desire for some desperate remedy. A fire will be kindled in the sand, the embers raked out, and the sick man laid in their place, to sweat him, and drive out the disease; failing a change for the better, he may be forsaken by his kinsfolk in their fear, and left to die.

Branding with a hot iron, or the application of heat in any other way, is a feeble resource of the desert people, but it often produces most excellent results. The letting of blood is also practised with equal success. But in all cases the patient is in the hands of Allah, whose

will is supreme, and to it all bow in humble submission, hoping of course for the ultimate recovery of the sick man.

Fortunately they are a healthy race. Their plain fare, and simple food, and their life in the open country, render them at all times fit subjects for recovery from the ordinary ailments of men and women. Serious wounds heal in the course of time without any particular attention, beyond the help of the hareem, and rest at home. Sometimes, however, their anxiety overcomes their reluctance to search for aid. On one of my journeys through the Hauran, a messenger appeared at the guest chamber of Sejerah, a village occupied by the part of a tribe of Bedawin, where my friend (Mr. C. A. Hornstein) and I were being entertained, to ask if the Frangi (Europeans) would come and see a wounded man. We both went with him to a cottage filled with women, weeping over a man lying on an improvised couch, his arm bound in very dirty pieces of linen cloth. The odour from the wound was offensive, and when we inquired the reason for the smell, and the cause of the pallor on the man's features, we were told that his sword-arm had been almost severed by a sword cut, and was hanging by the muscle at the back; but they had put the mutilated portion into its original position, and tightly bound it with the rags at their disposal. The carbolic acid mixture which they had procured from the military doctor at Sheikh Sa'ad they were unable to use. They said the man would not take it. He had tried, but the first taste gave him so much pain, they could not even by force compel him to try another dose!

I was afraid to touch him, as I had no knowledge of

medicine or surgery, and his appearance alarmed me as much as it did the women; his pitiful look, and their beseeching tones only served to emphasise my impotence. As the man seemed in imminent danger, I urged them to send immediately for the army surgeon and get the arm amputated, to save his life. In spite of my insistence, they refused to believe I was helpless, and wailed the louder at my suggestion to fetch the doctor for the man to lose his arm. We left them with the utmost difficulty; their distress at our inability to render any assistance was most acute and lamentable.

A death in the camp causes more distress of mind than the loss of a life on the foray; there is the painful vigil, through long anxious days and weary nights, till the tension is broken. The deceased is wrapped in a shroud of white calico, whether he is a prince of the Arab or a poor wandering Bedawy, and his corpse is laid in a shallow pit over which a heap of stones is piled to keep it safely in the grave from the birds of the air and the beasts of earth. A headstone marks the place of rest, and the rude sculptures of the unskilled Bedawy artist adorn it, showing forth the particular virtues of the departed, and the estimation in which he was held. If he was a sheikh noted for his generous dealing with his fellowmen, a coffee-pot indicates their appreciation of his hospitality.

The grave in the earth or the pit below the shifting sand of the desert, is the kingdom of the dead to which the Prophet Ezekiel alludes in verse 20, chapter xxvi.: "When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down into the pit." Similar re-

ferences to this custom are found in Isaiah xiv. 15, xxxviii. 17, li. 14.

The dead are buried on the day that life is extinct, or in the early morning, if death has taken place in the evening. The corpse is washed, wrapped in its winding sheet, and laid in the grave, in the simple way of a primitive people, with neither ceremony nor the ostentatious trappings of woe that are seen in a civilised nation.

A man's kinsmen sacrifice at his grave a ewe, without sprinkling of blood; they boil and distribute the meat to the funeral company. No sacrifice is kept for a woman, but the corpse is sprinkled with perfumes when it is carried out of the camp.

Graves are frequently visited by the women who weep for the dead. A widow will lead her children thither and teach them to mourn the loss of their father while she bewails her dead in a forced suffocating voice and violently sobbing:—

Ya habeeby!—Alas, Beloved!
Weyley Weyley—Woe is me!

CHAPTER IV.

THE STRIFE OF THE WILDERNESS.

I. THE GHRAZZU.

THERE has always been in the desert a curious blend of stolid resignation and quick passion, a stealthy manner and languid air which help the nomad in the pursuit of booty and the support of his family. Nature has apparently fashioned him for a thief. In the earliest inscriptions his progenitors are called plunderers. Their habitation has been the wilderness, from whence they issued on their predatory excursions, either to pillage the caravan on its way through the desert, or raid the settled country on the border of their home. Throughout all history incursions have been common. Before the Hebrew dominion of Palestine, the Tell el Amarna tablets inform us, they raided Canaan; since their occupation of the country the Bedawin have lived on its borders, disturbed its peace, warred upon its people, and carried off their goods (see Job i. 14, 15, 16; Judges vi. 4).

Even in his own tribe there is no law in practical operation prohibiting theft. It has been said that if one man was fortunate enough to catch another he might cut off his hand, but this form of punishment would provoke a serious quarrel and result in further loss. The most obvious method of treating an offender is to seize

the first opportunity of relieving him of a portion of his goods. It is also the least dangerous and most effective method of settling a difference of opinion of the right of possession. Might is right at all times, and seems to be the prevailing custom amongst all desert tribes. Theft is not a conscious act of wrong-doing, and does not appear to be distinct from the lowest form of existence exhibited in all predatory animals. The incipient desire for the possession of anything within reach is the natural instinct of the animal nature. The dogs in the streets of Jerusalem are only restrained from stealing by the power of the watchful eye, of man or beast. They even occupy distinctive quarters, and raid each other's retreats for the purpose of pillage. Both the peasants and the townspeople of Palestine call the Bedawy "the dog of the world," because he steals for his living. But he has a certain amount of honour, and fair dealing between man and man in matters of trade, otherwise he would find it impossible to do any business at all, either in camp or town. Merchants from large towns periodically visit the Bedawin tribes, bringing for sale clothes, hardware, and provisions, such as coffee, sugar, and salt, etc. Should a dispute arise, the matter is referred to the sheikh whose authority is rarely contested by the litigants. Tradesmen find them willing to pay just debts, and it is a rare occurrence for a merchant to be molested on his round of business by any member of a tribe of repute. Tribes vary considerably both in character and reputation. Some are rich and powerful, hospitable and courageous; while others are poor and evil. Colonel Conder in *Heth and Moab* (p. 323) gives his opinion of them as follows: —

"As regards Arab character generally, the result of

several years' experience is not by any means satisfactory, nor have recent events tended to increase our respect for the Bedawin. The noble nomad, ranging free as air in the desert, is an original creation of Arab poetry, which has been somewhat clumsily copied by those who see the possibility of turning him to political account. He is represented as naturally high-minded, hospitable, and observant of his word and oath, brave to a fault, and generous to prodigality. But what we have learned of his actual character in Egypt or in Sinai only serves to strengthen the impression made by a sojourn of several months in the Belka.

"As regards Arab character generally, it seems probable that they may be divided into two great categories—those who have become sordidly avaricious and degraded by contact with civilisation, who have acquired some new ideas, such as those of cultivation, of keeping cows and goats, nay, whom even like Goblan, sent children to school and trod the deck of a gunboat; and on the other hand the category of the Arab in all his aboriginal savagery, stalking the desert with nothing but his shirt and his long tuft of pigtail, a cautious, crafty, not to say cowardly barbarian, lurking for the stray stranger, filching the camel of his friend, or joining the noble contest of ten against one. Every man, every family, every tribe of the Arabs has its own character. Human nature is perhaps at the bottom not much different in the desert and in the city; but an Arab is without any such incentives to improvement as spring from the religion and civilisation of the West, and the idea of the noble dweller in the wilderness being superior in morality and motive to the Western Frank is an enthusiast's dream, as mischievous as it is unfounded.

There are those who seem to believe a camel to be a superior method of transport to the locomotive, the fleet Arab runner preferable to the telegraph, the Bedawin greater than the Briton: but to such there is only one answer, if they wish to study the question fairly and without motive—Go to the desert and see for yourselves."

Doughty, *facile princeps* of Eastern travellers, says:—

"Motlog Allayda, the great sheykh, was a grey-headed man, and with homely gentle manners, he seemed a fatherly personage: when about to depart, he came to seek me out in my chamber. Bred in a civil society, it is likely he would have been, for all the world, a perfectly good man: but the necessitous livelihood of the wilderness must cast him into many perplexities, out of which they will unwind themselves by any shift, which always they think better than fighting on the plain field; and though some of their fox-like expedients be but base treachery. But there is no public dishonour in the desert; all is reckoned human policy, that is done within the tribesmen's common interest, and contrary to the world, which is all without their tribe. Thus every Bedawy has two faces, this of gentle human kindness at home, the other of wild misanthropy and his teeth set against the world besides.

"All things are much as we esteem them; they think themselves honest men enough whom we take to be most dangerous wretches and arrant thieves."[1]

When a raid is contemplated, preparations are soon made, and the destination settled; all who wish to go on the war path by universal consent appoint a special

[1] *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, vol. i., p. 368, by C. M. Doughty.

leader for that particular enterprise on account of certain local knowledge, or a distinguished service record. He will always belong to a sheikhly family, but it may happen that only half a dozen enter on the venture, it becomes then a mere thieving expedition without honour but with great hazard. The *ghrazzu, i.e.* raid, is organised for the purpose of obtaining spoil, half the plunder falls to the chief, who frequently with lavish generosity bestows it all on the men who follow him.

A good horse is an indispensable mode of locomotion. The man with the swiftest steed can be more venturesome than others less favourably mounted, though he realises to the fullest extent that "he who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day". Self-preservation is a fully developed characteristic, that creates in the mind of the horseman an appropriate esteem for the animal on which he may be carried out of danger, whose agility enables him to avoid the spear thrust, or cut of the sword. But these advantages are due to the training the horse has received, which can only be brought to a state of perfection by the exercise of care and kindness at the hands of a man who has a natural affection for the creature in his service.

Arabian Bedawin ride upon a pad of felt with a slender girth, without stirrups, and guide their mares with a halter. In Syria, a piece of wood, covered with leather or skin, of mediæval pattern, is the saddle. It fits close to the back of the horse, adjusted by a pad of felt. On the top of it, front and back, are two peaks: between them the rider is fixed, and his seat is firm and sure. The stirrup leathers are short, and the stirrups are like elongated pans from Damascus. They are most uncomfortable to an Englishman (I have tried

them), but they enable the Bedawy to feel his horse's flanks and guide his steed without a bit, and raise himself above his saddle when he handles his long spear in the fight.

Some tribes raid on horseback, others ride camels and lead their mares until they meet with resistance and are compelled to fight, they then mount their horses to engage in the fray. They have no idea of tactics, no attempt is made to act in concert, every man fights in his own way, charging first one and then another of the enemy as it may suit his purpose, each trying to secure as much as he can for himself, and if defeated fleeing for his own safety. Division is made of the spoil if the result of the raid is favourable, except when every man has secured a portion for himself, the most unfortunate receiving a part of that belonging to the sheikh. A tribe bent on war rides at full strength, a raiding party is therefore known as such, if they fail to escape unobserved, by virtue of its inferior numbers.

When a small party of five or six well armed men depart on a raid they often prefer to go afoot, each man carrying his food in a bag, and lurking among the hills of the territory of the tribe they hope to rob, until a favourable opportunity is offered; the return journey being made on the camels they have seized. The track of mounted men is more easily recognised, and distinguished from ordinary travellers, owing to the absence of young camels and men on foot who usually accompany a caravan on the march.

A Bedawy can readily discover the route of a raiding party that has lately passed along the road. After first noticing the footprints, he continues to watch the track of the mounted men, picking up inconsiderable

trifles which offer food for reflection; a date leaf, a piece of stick, grains of corn, all help to establish the identity of the raiders, even to the part of the country from whence they have come, and the direction of their journey. When the enemy's country is entered every precaution is taken to escape observation, one man rides leisurely in front, while the rest are concealed in the small valleys of the undulating plain. This manœuvre does not deceive the people who notice the single horseman, their suspicions are quickly aroused, and their watchful eyes and alert attitude may cause the raiders to depart without striking a blow.

I had on one occasion an experience of this method of reconnoitring. I was travelling from M'Shetta to Madeba under escort of six men when the appearance of a solitary horseman in the distance alarmed the men with me, who were passing through the country of the Beni Sakhr without their sanction; a second horseman suddenly joined the first as if he had risen from the ground, and the two rode on together. The restlessness of my escort increased beyond my understanding, but I afterwards learned that a single horseman may be the forerunner of a troop, and their ability to hide even on a desert plain is incomprehensible to an Englishman. The men who were accompanying me were evidently aware of impending danger. Their eyes attain unusual quickness in the wilderness, and signs invisible to me and the friend with me, Mr. C. A. Hornstein of Jerusalem, of the proximity of raiders were plain to them. One of the escort disappeared in one of the folds of the earth to look for further evidence of the intentions of the strangers. Meanwhile the horsemen in the distance increased to four, in the same unaccountable manner, slightly

altering the direction they were taking to cut us off before we could reach a place of safety. Our advance guard returned at full gallop, from a slight depression of the plain in front, shouting "Hamydeh! Hamydeh!" (the name of a tribe with whom they had a blood feud) and off went our escort to escape with their lives, the hindmost only having the grace to call for us to follow. I turned to my companion, who knows the Arabs well, and we looked round for our servant, but he was a long way behind with our baggage.

The four Hamydeh still came on, wondering probably at our leisurely pace, but we had no intention of either being intimidated or shot without some show of resistance. We examined our revolvers, unslung our guns, removed the cartridges that had been intended for game and replaced them with ball, then dropped the butt ends on our thighs as our man joined us, so that the approaching Hamydeh might know that we were indisposed to follow the example of our escort and flee before them. We determined to resist the first sign of attack, and looked eagerly towards the Bedawin slowly gaining on us, for any evidence of hostility; when suddenly they stopped, almost within gunshot, and, wheeling round, rode as steadily back as they had come. The tension of the last hour relaxed, and I candidly confess, even while I write at a distance of time and space, I remember a feeling of profound satisfaction. There was no disappointment to me at any rate that we had escaped an uncomfortable exchange of shot, and I am sure my companions were highly elated, not through fear of the result, but from a dislike to deal with men who might arouse their tribe and prevent us continuing a journey we had only barely commenced. Besides they are

notoriously bad shots, and in aiming at one mark might have hit another ; if they had relied only on their spears we could easily have prevented a collision by taking aim before they reached us, which would have made our presence in the country distinctly unpleasant through the vengeance of their tribe..

When they were scarcely visible in the distance our escort returned in gallant style, careering over the plain with great jubilation, pretending to have made a detour to see how many Hamydeh were concealed in the valleys. We smiled in a very incredulous manner at their excuses, and on our return to Madeba paid without demur the price agreed upon at the start. Whether the Hamydeh were on a raid or merely looking for anything that might perchance appear in their way we could not ascertain. They were certainly away from their own country, on land belonging to the Beni Sakhr, and therefore bent on mischief, but all our questions about their business were carefully avoided by the men whose courage and character had been so very unfavourably displayed.

The raids and counter-raids are the destruction of the Bedawin. They cannot thrive in the midst of disturbance. The continual exchange of beasts, and the losses incurred, leave no room for improvement, and furnish no prospect for the development of industry, where the hope of the people lies in their desire to enrich themselves at the expense of others. Cattle raiding is quite distinct from warfare, and may be accomplished without the shedding of blood. It is the adventurous pastime of the nomadic race, as well as the principal business of their life. In this state of society as exhibited by this essential characteristic, we are referred

back to the time when these practices were associated with the children of Israel: Joshua xxii. 8, "He (Joshua) spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle"; Jeremiah xlix. 32, "And their camels shall be a booty and the multitude of their cattle a spoil".

The barking of the nomad dogs, at the sudden onslaught of mounted men in the darkness of the night, arouses the slumbering inhabitants of the Bedawin camp. A shouting without as the men seize their guns to defend their property, shrieking women, crying children, disturbed in sleep, and the reckless firing of guns, amid the cries that the *ghrazzu* is upon them, are the fearful sounds of a terror-stricken people. The sudden rush of battle has overwhelmed them; the mad beat of hoofs, a stampede of camels, fierce oaths, and clash of steel are the horrors of the night. A few more shots; shrieks and moans burst from the wounded and die into moans of agony. Death and destruction follow the madness of the people. Men secure their mares and mount to follow the raiders, who collect with unequalled celerity the cattle of the tribe; they seldom succeed in recovering their beasts. Superior numbers keep what they have won, some of the defenders will have been slain by the attacking party, a mischance which they will deplore more severely if some of their own tribe have perished.

If no lives are lost there is no lamentation; failure to prevent the loss of their substance is no cause of grief that wrings the heart; astonishment at the sudden attack and its result produces a silent but revengeful frame of mind. They speak in undertones without complaining; all is ruled by the will of Allah, the loss

is theirs to-day, they will also bring evil upon the other. The foemen have been identified and retribution will follow them in the ordinary course of operations. When a *ghrazzu* has been successful and the raiders have carried off a large number of cattle, the calamity is general, and the sheikh taxes the tribesmen according to the number left in their possession to recoup the losers and give them a fresh start. The camp is a commonwealth of brethren ruled by their sheikhs with equitable moderation, and the disaster is a public adventure of the tribe. They divide each other's losses under the distress of their circumstances. If one man's cattle, with the herdsman, is taken it is a personal affair and cannot be considered as a tribal matter. He will receive much sympathy, but no help.

A raid is never made on a neighbouring tribe, but on some herd or camp lying out of reach of immediate retribution. The Beni Sakhr once rode 400 miles into the heart of Arabia, and brought back with them over a hundred camels. Slow-going cattle cannot be stolen from a camp very far from the raiders' home without a powerful escort well able to maintain their cause against the tribe bereaved of their substance. In that case they are allowed to retain their booty because of the weakness of the losers, who will not risk more than they have already lost.

When a raiding party has been out for some time there is anxiety in their camp. The women sit all day watching for signs of their return in a fearsome mood, lest perchance a mishap has overtaken a husband or a son. As soon as they appear on the horizon a joyful cry like "*Loolliloo,*" repeated in a shrill tone with the clapping of hands, is the welcome being prepared for them (Judges

xi. 34). If the party come back with booty there is much elation with the sound, but the note dies into silence when they are leading nothing home, and anxious matrons gaze on them to see if all are safe.

The wife receives the husband, unsaddles his camel and carries the trappings into the tent ; no word passes between them. He goes first to the *menzul*, salutes his brethren, and utters the usual formula that it is God's will they should gain nothing, but a reverse.

In Genesis xiv. there is a brief account of a raid undertaken by Abraham for the recovery of his nephew and his goods. The names of the kings here mentioned, Professor Sayce informs us in *Patriarchal Palestine* (p. 64), have been discovered in inscriptions and cuneiform texts, which "confirm what had been long known to us in the Book of Genesis," "they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

"And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

"And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew: for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.

"And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

"And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.

"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought

again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

. . . . . .

"And the King of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons and take the goods to thyself.

"And Abram said to the King of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

"Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion" (Gen. xiv. 11-24).

The description of a raid which follows from Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (p. 333), will supply the details that are not given in the record of Abram's venture. They may be amplified by the perusal of his story of a battle on page 46:—

"One of these evenings there rode into our encampment a main gharuzzu, eighty men of Bishr, that had mounted to go set upon their foemen W. Aly; they passed this night as guests of the Fukara, in their own dîra. They were friendly entertained, and heard after their suppers the latest advice of the W. Aly's being pitched about the wells *Mogeyra*: about eighty miles from hence, at the haj road, a journey below el-Héjr. I enquired of Zeyd, Would they not send this night to warn their cousins of the sister tribe? *Answer*, 'Ha, no! but let them all be taken, for us'. Months later, being with some Aly tribesmen I heard them censure this treacherous malice of the Fukara; and yet being

full of the like themselves, which in truth is the natural condition of Beduins. Of the Annezy nation, unto which all these tribes belong, and that is greatest of all ashirats in the Peninsula, it is spoken in proverb, 'God increased Annezy, and He has appointed divisions among them': there is no time when some of the kindreds are not *dôm*, or robber enemies of some other. The Annezy have been compared with B. Israel; they are not without resemblance. The seat of this people in the first Mohammedan ages, was, according to their tradition, the dîra lying a little north of Medina, which is now of the W. Aly. Then they conquered Keybar, whose feverish plain valleys became their patrimony to this day.

"It happened strangely that while Bishr was out against them a main ghrazzu of the Wélad Aly had mounted to go and set upon Bishr. These hostile squadrons by a new adventure met with each other in the wilderness. An hundred thelûl riders cover the ground of a regiment. It is a brave sight as they come on with a song, bowing in the tall saddles, upon the necks of their gaunt stalking beasts, with a martial shining of arms. The foemen in sight the sheukh descend with the long lances upon the led horses; and every sheikh's backrider, *radîf*, who is also his gun bearer, now rides in the thelûl saddle. These thelûl riders upon the slower sheeplike beasts are in comparison of their few light horsemen like a heavy infantry of matchlock men. The nomad cavalier, sitting loosely upon a pad without stirrups, can carry no long and heavy firearm which he could not reload. Only few of these southern sheikhs are possessors of some old flint horse pistols, which abandoned in our grandsires' time, have been sold

away from Europe. Their hope is in the romhh or shelfa, the Beduin lance: the beam made of a light reed of the rivers of Mesopotamia, is nearly two or three short horse lengths: they charge them above their heads. Agîd or conductor of the W. Aly, was a beardless and raw young man, Fáhd, their great sheikh's son; and Askar of the other, son of Mishel, the great sheikh above mentioned; these young hostile Annezy leaders were sisters' sons. Fáhd tilting impetuously pierced his cousin Askar; but, overborne by strong hands, he was himself taken alive. The W. Aly, glorious and confident in their tents, were seized with panic terror in the field in the presence of the warlike Anájy, the most big of bone and resolute of that country Beduins; in each of whom they looked for an avenger of the blood slain before Kheybar. They cried out therefore that they were brethren! and those W. Aly which were one hundred and twenty riders with arms in their hands, submitted to the eighty lion-like men of Bishr; every one pitifully entreating his spoiler, '*Akhyey, ya akhyey*, ah, little brother mine! take thou then my thelûl, have here my arms, and even my mantle; take all, only let me go alive'. No more than a few sheikhs of them, who were horsemen, escaped that day upon their mares. Yet of the thelûl riders there broke away, three hardy men mountaineers; they were Moahib, that had ridden with them in hope to divide the spoils of the common enemy. Before the year was out the Moahib by the same Bishr were miserably bereaved, in one day, of all their cattle. The sheikhs upon all sides were, at some time, of my acquaintance; and I had this tale among them.

"The Bishr received their dakhîl to quarter; they

would not, only remembering the vengeance, make a butchery of their kinsmen.

. . . . . .

"But Fáhd was led away with the Bishr, since he must answer for the life of Askar; if his cousin died he must die for his death, unless the next of kin should consent to receive the blood ransom; he would be entertained in the meanwhile in the hostile kinsmen's tents. Askar recovered slowly in the next months. I asked, 'When those shearers of W. Aly came home shorn, with what dances and lullilooing will the hareem sally forth to meet them?' It was answered, 'Ay billah, they had merited the women's derision!' But how being one hundred and twenty strong, had they submitted to the fewer in number? *Answer*, 'Are they not W. Aly? and this is the manner of them.' They are unwarlike, but the Fejir, the sister tribe, were never contemned by their enemies, which are all those strong free tribes behind them, B. Atieb, Howeytát, Billi, Jeheyna."

2. WARFARE.

The Bedawin during the last generation have been undoubtedly impressed with the increase of authority and the gradual progress of the Ottoman dominion. The Government cannot now be defied with impunity, nor regarded with the contempt which individual members of a tribe express towards the soldiers of the regular army, but it extends over tribes, rather than persons, and they are left to manage their own affairs so long as it is convenient for the mutaserif of a province to over-look their disagreements. The chiefs of the principal tribes are expected to maintain order

amongst their own people, and live at peace with their neighbours; but all attempts at combination are frustrated by the methods of the representatives of the Sultan. They prefer an armed neutrality, distributing favours amongst the different sheikhs to make them jealous of one another; sometimes even inciting them to quarrel, and using them to fulfil a promise of chastisement of a smaller tribe for an overt act of rebellion. The government is powerless to prevent personal acts of violence connected with the expiation of blood, but opposition is always offered when two contending tribes prepare for battle, unless they decide to fight beyond the boundary of the province.

There is no sense of national unity, no common social interest. The strong, firm hand of a competent governor restrains to some extent their savage practices, when complaints are formulated by the weak; but no effort is made to induce them to settle in amicable relationship for the purpose of improving their condition, and making the best use of the land in their possession. In the Hauran and the Belka they live carelessly, chiefly on the reputation of their past. Here in Eastern Palestine where the pressure of Turkish influence is most strong, there is a better inclination to labour, if only by deputy, a more serious disposition to trade, and a greater dread of authority.

The warlike spirit of the tribesmen is seen to greater advantage in the desert, where the long arm of Turkish rule is powerless to hold the balance of power between the tribes who contend for supremacy and exhibit their fighting strength in the day of battle. The great object of every tribe is to maintain its reputation, and a contest is necessary to determine the relative position of the

tribes who desire to keep their place in the estimation of public opinion.

Revenge for murder which has involved more than one family is the chief reason for a declaration of war, it may be necessary to resort to arms on account of the loss of life in a raid. In any case certain rules are observed with an exactitude that is not without humour when a comparison is instituted between Bedawin warfare and a European conflict. The cultivation of the art of war in the wilderness is carried on as a serious business, but it is never on the scale of European battles nor is it conducted in the same way. Every man acts for himself, without regard for leader, or company; he is his own general, carries his own commissariat; entirely depends on his own arm, his horse, and his courage. A declaration of war is made by two men riding into the country of the enemy, and killing the first man they meet. Active hostilities do not immediately follow. Menaces and threats, perhaps another murder, or a raid, keep the two contending parties at arm's length, and in a state of suspense, culminating at last in a pitched battle. Some tribes have been at war for generations; so long in fact that the original cause has been forgotten, and it is impossible to tell now which was the aggressor. All the neighbouring tribes know there is a state of war existing, by the way in which the different members of the hostile tribes avoid each other's company, and carefully abstain from being found on the wrong side of the boundary of their own land.

If either tribe has suffered very severely from a raid, the long enmity breaks out in a wild frenzy that no longer waits for a time of settled warfare. Weapons are sharpened in real earnest, and a determination to

wipe out past injuries at one stroke fixes the time for a great *ghrazzu*, that calls for every spearman to answer the cry of the blood of their tribesmen. A picturesque description of a battle between two implacable foes is given in Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (vol. ii., p. 46).

"Meteyr came upon their enemies as the day lightened; the Kahtân ran from the beyts, with their arms, sheikhs leaped upon their mares; and the people encouraged themselves with shouting. Then seeing they were beset by Meteyr they contemned them, and cried, '*Jabhum Ullah*,' 'A godsend!'—but this was a day of reckoning upon both parts to the dreary death. The Meteyr had 'two hundred' mares under them: but they were of the less esteemed northern brood. The Kahatin in the beginning were sixty horse-riders. Then thirty more joined them from another great menzil of theirs pitched at a little distance. The Kahtân were now more than the ghrazzu of Meteyr, who finally gave ground.

"Then first the Kahtân looked about them: and were ware of the town bands coming on (allies of Meteyr). The Kahatin, of whom not many were fallen, shouted one to another, in suspense of heart, 'Eigh! is it Ibn Rashíd?—but no! for Ibn Rashíd rides with one bàrak: but these ride like townsfolk— Ullah! they are *hâthr*!' —Now as the town approached some knew them and cried, 'These be the Kusmân! they are the Zuâmil' (Zamils or the people of Zamil). When they saw it was so they hasted to save their milch camels.

"Zamil, yet distant, seeing Beduin horsemen driving off the camels, exclaimed, 'Are not these the Moslemin (those of our own part)?' 'Nay!' answered him a

sheikh of Meteyr (who came riding with the town to be a shower of the way in the Khála) 'they are billah el Kahtân!' The town cavaliers were too few to gallop out against them. And now the Kahtân, giving themselves to save their great cattle forsook their menzil: where they left booths, household stuff, and wives and children in the power of their foemen.

"The horsemen of Meteyr pursued the flying Kahtân; who turned once more and repulsed them: then the Aneyza cavaliers sallied to sustain their friends. The rest of the Meteyr who alighted, ran in to spoil their enemies' tents,—And he and he whose housewives were lately pierced with spears of the Kahtân, or whose babes those fiend-like men slew, did now the like by their foemen; they thrust through as many hareem, and slit the throats of their little ones before the mothers' faces, crying to them, 'Oh, wherefore did your men so with our little ones the other day!' Some frantic women ran on the spoilers with tent staves; and the Meteyries, with weapons in their hands, and in the tempest of their blood, spared them not at all—Thus there perished five or six wives, and as many children of Kahtân.

"In their most tribulation a woman hid her husband's silver, six hundred reâls (that was very much for any Bedawy)! in a girby: and stript off her blue smock—all they wear besides the haggu on their hunger starved bodies: and hanging the water-skin on her shoulder, she set her little son to ride upon the other. Then she ran from her tent with a lamentable cry, *Weyléy Weyléy!* Woe is me! and fled naked through the tumult of the enemies. The Meteyr, who saw it, supposed that one of the people had spoiled the woman, and thought shame to follow her: yet some called to her, to fling

down that she bore on her shoulder: but she, playing the mad woman, cried out, 'She was undone! was it not enough to strip a sheikh's daughter? and would they have even this water, which she carried for the life of her child!' Others shouted to let the woman pass: and she fled fast, and went by them all;—and saved her good man's fortune, with this cost of his wife's modesty.

"There fell thirty men of Kahtân,—the most were slain in the flight: and of Meteyr ten.—These returned to bury their dead; but the human charity is here unknown to heap a little earth over the dead foemen!

"A woman messenger came in from the flying Kahtân, to Zâmil. The town now alighted at the wells: she sought safe conduct for some of their sheikhs, to come and speak with him: which Zâmil granted.—Then the men returned and kissing him as suppliants, they entreated him, 'since their flocks, and the tents and stuff, were now (as he might see) in the hands of Meteyr, to suffer them to come to the water, that they might drink and not perish'. They had sweated for their lives, and that summer's day was one of greatest heat; and having no girbies, they must suffer, in flying through the desert, an extremity of thirst. But who might trust to words of Beduin enemies! and therefore they bound themselves with a solemn oath,—'*Aleyk áhad Ullah, wa amàn Ullah, in ma akhûmak! el khàyin yakhûnhu Ullah*!'—'The covenant of the Lord be with thee and his peace! I will not surely betray thee! who betrayeth, the Lord shall him betray'.

"Such was the defeat of the intruded Kahtân, lately formidable even to Ibn Rashid. . . . Many Kahtân perished in their flight through the Khála: even lighter

wounds, in that extremity of weariness and thirst, become mortal. They fled southward three days lest their old foes, hearing of their calamity, should fall upon them: we heard, that some Ateyba had met with them, and taken 'two hundred' of the saved milch camels. Certain of them who came into El-Ethellah said, that they were destroyed and had lost 'an hundred men'—so dearly they bought the time past (now two full years) of their playing the wolf in Nejd!

"Hayzàn was fallen! their young Absalom; 'a young man of a thievish false nature,' said his Beduin foes; it was he who threatened me, last year, in a guest chamber at Hâyil: Hayzàn was slain for that Meteyr sheikh, who lately fell by his hand in the north. A Sheykhly kinsman of the dead sought him in the battle: they ran together: and Hayzàn was borne through the body with a deadly wide wound. The young man was very robust for a Beduwy, and his strong hand had not swerved: but his lance thrust was fended by a shirt of mail which his foeman wore privily under his cotton tunic. That Meteyr was a manly rider upon a good horse, and after Hayzàn he bore down other five sheykhs—when the fortune of the day was determined by the coming of 'the Zuamil,' he with his brother and his son, yet a strippling (principal sheykh's sons soon become horsemen, and ride with their elders to the field), and a few of his Aarab, made prize of eighty milch camels! In that day he had been struck by lances and shot in the breast, eleven times: but the dints pierced not his 'Davidian' shirt of antique chain work. They say, that the stroke of a gun-shot leaves upon the body fenced by such harness, only a grievous bruise.

"A brother of Hayzàn, Terkey, was fallen: and their

sheykhly sister. She was stripped, and thrust through with a spear!—because Kahtân had stripped and slain a Meteyry sheykh's daughter. The old Kahtân sheykh —father of these ill-starred brethren, hardly escaped upon a thelûl. Hayzàn, mortally wounded, was stayed in the saddle, in the flight, till evening: and when they came to the next *golbân* (south of Dókhany) the young sheykh gave up the ghost; and his companions cast his warm body into one of those well pits."

The struggles of the early Israelites with the border nations were on a larger scale, but the resemblance between their battles and those of the greater Bedawin tribes is sufficiently strong to see there has been no change in the barbarous methods employed by the inhabitants of the wilderness (*cf.* Joshua viii. 24-27, xi. 11; 1 Sam. xiv. 30, xvii. 33, xxiii. 5).

Among civilised nations a battle may take place at any point, while among the Bedawin it would be likely to occur at some locality settled beforehand and well known to both parties; the last two great battles fought in the Hauran were so arranged in the plain east of Kelât ez Zerka. When I passed on my last journey from Amman to Salkad the forces of the Beni Sakhr were gathering for the fierce struggle in which they were about to engage.

Until quite recently a war cradle,[1] a sort of canopy decorated with ostrich feathers, in which was seated a Bedawy maiden, was carried to battle by the tribe who had maintained the supremacy of the desert. It is now in the possession of the Rawalleh, who won it years ago by force of arms, and carried it off the field in the hour of victory. Other tribes have said they have lost the

[1] *Cf.* 1 Sam. iv. 5, 10.

art of war, and dared not venture to run the risk of losing the trophy, but in 1881 it was taken into the conflict with the Beni Sakhr, and has remained with the Rawalleh to this day.

In the contest between the Philistines and the Israelites similar preparations were made and there was the same disposition of their armies (1 Sam. xvii. 1-12). They face each other for days, their martial fervour being kept alive by one horseman after another riding to the front with a challenge, a tilt with lances may follow without any sanguinary result, but if blood is shed, it is the signal for battle. A hand to hand fight follows; no quarter is given, and no prisoners are taken. This accounts for the great loss of life, the terrible butchery that is so often deplored by readers of the Old Testament, who do not seem possessed of the historic sense that will transport them from the civilisation of our present era to the barbarous age when the cause of right had to be maintained by the sword.

The idea of depriving a man of his liberty had not entered into the minds of the captains of the army of Israel, or their enemies. They had no means at their disposal of keeping a large number of men under lock and key. The habitations of the people, then and now, were altogether different from the buildings erected by nations whose civilisation includes a merciful consideration of the rank and file of an army in the field. Besides an enemy, whose life is saved, is still an enemy, and may again appear in hostile array, when the call to arms is given. He may be deprived of his weapons, but that would be an act that followed the close of the war, when one nation had established a complete ascendency over the vanquished. The Turks have done this with the

Fellaheen of Palestine to prevent disorder, as the Philistines did with the Israelites when "there was neither sword nor spear found in the land" (1 Sam. xiii. 22).

When a tribe is called to arms a flag is hoisted on the top of a hill in the mountainous districts; it is the signal of war. Herr Schumacher relates in the account of his survey of Western Jaulan how he was the innocent cause of the assembly of a tribe prepared for battle (p. 105, *Across the Jordan*). "I had practical experience of this matter not at Tell ej Jemuah (where he was the guest of the Wulid Ali), but in Northern Jaulân, where a like custom exists. On a hill, situated in the district of the 'Arab el Fuddel,' I had occasion during the survey to set up a triangulation staff with a white and red flag. Almost immediately on its appearance armed men of the tribe gathered to the place, and I had great trouble in satisfactorily explaining to them the real object of my manœuvre."

In the Old Testament frequent allusion is made to this custom—Ps. lxxiv. 4, "Thine enemies set up their ensigns for signs". And the prophet Isaiah threatening the Israelites with an invasion tells them that God would lift up an ensign to the nations from far (Isaiah v. 26). The same prophet says that "there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah xi. 10). "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah xi. 12), and again (xxx. 17) "an ensign on an hill".

Stories of deeds of valour performed before the enemy are told in every guest tent. Every tribe has a mythi-

cal hero, or an ancestor whose exploits have been recounted so often that the tribesmen have begun to believe they are true. At the very least fifty men will have been vanquished singlehanded. Corroborative evidence is offered by some mark on the face of a rock, a great horseshoe, or something the informant shows as the hero's footstep, or a cleft made by his sword, and the listener is expected to accept the statements without demur. There is doubtless some truth in the record of brave deeds. Many men have been courageous and their glorious feats of arms have been handed down from generation to generation, thrilling the listeners round the camp fire in the evenings. Women have great admiration for martial glory, and show their appreciation of a hero by a shrill note with which they hail every reference to him in the recital of the story of his exploits (*cf.* 1 Sam. xviii. 7: "And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands"). The men are pleased with the admiration of the women and desire to win their esteem.

When a tribe is wearied with warlike alarms and its members grow tired of their long and unceasing tension of mind and the restrictions which have kept them from trading with the towns in the distance, a messenger is sent bearing a white flag to the enemy with an offer to negotiate terms for the cessation of hostilities. Two men are then chosen, one from each tribe engaged in the strife, to discuss the preliminary arrangements. News of the armistice travels speedily through the desert tribes and it soon becomes known that the face of each tribe is turned towards the other. This saying of the Bedawin is characteristic of the East. It is an expression

frequently found in the Scriptures with the same meaning as the nomads attribute to it. The face indicates the person and presence, and its use in varied forms in the Bible denotes the attitude of God towards man, and man to God: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (Ps. xxxiv. 16; see also Ps. cxxxii. 10); "The Lord will not turn His face from you, if ye return unto Him" (2 Chron. xxx. 9).

Man's disposition towards his fellow-men is also made known by his "face" (2 Chron. xxxii. 2): "When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that his face was to war" (Heb.). To accept one's face is to show them a favour (Gen. xix. 21): "I have accepted thy face (Heb.) concerning this thing also". To withstand a person to his face is a way of boldly reproving him (Gal. ii. 11), it may even proceed to an open rupture and gage of battle.

When the "face" of the tribes is turned to one another, a meeting is arranged months beforehand between them, hostilities are suspended, and mutual friends in other tribes discuss the matters in dispute, to prepare the way for an amicable adjustment of all their differences. When the day appointed for the meeting arrives, sheikhs from neighbouring tribes are invited to be present, and all assemble in the place fixed by mutual agreement. Complaints on both sides are formulated, witnesses are examined, losses assessed, and offers made by both parties; the one that has been most successful in battle and raid, wishing to let matters rest as they are, is willing to make peace without requiring payment from the other. The opposition tribe wants the number of camels stolen on either side to be estimated in the hope of retrieving some of their losses. Friends intervene,

one interceding with another without a satisfactory result, and the meeting is postponed with prospects of a settlement on a subsequent occasion.

3. The Call of the Blood.

(1) *Blood Feuds.*

An Arabic proverb "*Dam butlub dam*" (*i.e.* "blood calls for blood") is another form of the text in Genesis iv. 10, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground"; and in Genesis ix. 5, "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man," we recognise a resemblance to the law of blood now in force in the wilderness; see also Numbers xxxv. 33, "So ye shall not pollute the land whereon ye are: for blood defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it"; Genesis ix. 6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"; Judges ix. 28; 2 Sam. iii. 27; 1 Kings ii. 5.

The stain of blood is invariably hidden by covering it with dust (Gen. xxxvii. 26). If a horseman riding along a desert track should see the sign of blood on the side of the road, he will instantly dismount and cover it with earth, "to lay the *mâred*". It is the spirit of him who died by an act of violence, the victim of man's hate, and the *mâred* calls for vengeance on him who has taken the life of his fellow-man.

Job in the bitterness of his soul cries, "O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place" (Job xvi. 18). In Ezekiel (xxiv. 8, "that it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance: I have set her blood on the top of a rock, that it should not be

covered") God declares His judgment on the people who are swift to shed blood, in the forcible language that is now interpreted by Oriental customs still lingering in the untutored hearts of the people of the wilderness.

It is a duty of paramount importance for the nearest relative of a murdered man to take instant vengeance. Should the man-slayer escape, unless retribution is made by a substantial payment, his fate is only delayed for a time; there is a mark upon him, and men soon learn there is blood between him and another, called the "heir of blood," on whom the duty is laid to see that a ransom is provided, either by the life of him who shed it, or a price fixed by agreement (Ps. lv. 23; Heb. ix. 22; *cf.* Lev. xvii. 11).

Between hostile tribes where blood has been shed in battle, or by an encounter between two of their number there is no atonement, no remission without the shedding of blood, and whoever falls into the other's hands is in danger of being slain without remedy.

Satisfaction can be made by a payment after a raid, because cattle-lifting does not cause more than a temporary estrangement, and blood shed in the course of operations is not exactly of the same serious nature as a deliberate murder. If satisfaction is not given, atonement not made, and the slayer of his fellow-man refuses to pay the "price of blood" then a breach is made in the relations between the tribes, and a blood feud follows, increasing in intensity as life after life is forfeited; and many are lost before the cry of blood is appeased.

The "burden of blood is very sore," say the Bedawin. Blood guiltiness they believe is a great misfortune in

their life, rather than a stain on the character of human fellowship.

When a man desires to pay the price of ransom, and discharge a debt of blood, he will have friends or relations to act on his behalf and intercede for him. It is forty camels in Arabia for killing a man; in Syria the price is higher; though paid in cattle it is estimated in cash, and amounts to 33,333 piastres and 33 paras—seven threes; there is virtue in the number seven. A fixed tariff was instituted in Moab to regulate the scale of payment for limbs as well as lives:—

			£	s.	d.
Finger. . .	10 medgediehs, about		1	13	4
Left hand or arm	50	„	„ 7	16	8
Right arm or life	300	„	„ 47	0	0

The price of blood varies according to the position and strength of the family concerned, and the importance of the man that was slain. A higher price is often demanded, as an Arab troubles himself very little about scales and charges, and strives to get as much as he can. His adversary, on the other hand, is equally desirous of keeping his cattle and preserving his life, and if the sum asked is more than either his ability or intention to pay, the only way out of the difficulty is to seek a more desirable place of residence.

Amongst the lowest class the payment is not assessed at the higher standard. It may be substantially reduced in every case, by the arguments and good offices of mutual friends, if the slain is not of sheikhly family. Every one will endeavour to persuade "the heir of blood" to release the offender for the friendship he bears towards the intercessor, at a less price than the one

fixed by the formal and mutual agreement. The crime is now past, and it would be an advantage to establish peace; the faulty tribesman will be excused by all who are anxious to restore the fellowship, and his relations will help him to find the cattle required to pay for his deliverance.

There is no payment demanded by the friends of a cattle-lifter who is shot by the owner of the beasts he attempts to steal (Exodus xxii. 2): "If a thief be found breaking in and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him". The same law applies to all thieves, but the remembrance of the death of a brother will remain fresh, and will be the reason for another attempt to repair the misfortune, by carrying off more than the value of a life.

(2) *The Refuge.*

The man-slayer who flies to a tribe for safety is looked upon as an unhappy fugitive; he is received hospitably by the entertainers of the camp in which he seeks refuge. The tent of a Bedawy is a sanctuary. "Be we all," say the poor nomads, "guests of Allah." What God has therefore given for one, is also for another. The guest is offered food, and peace is established before any questions are asked or information given. There is no real peace, no sure refuge, before the supper has been eaten, and "the bread and salt" received by the refugee.

If a man hurrying to a safe retreat in consequence of a deed of violence is overtaken before he has reached his destination, there is a refuge even for him by the way. The name and reputation of a chief extends far beyond his tent, or the limits of this camp: and should

a fugitive, when overtaken by an avenger of blood, call on his name, and declare himself under his protection, the arm of vengeance will not fall on him, the sword raised to strike will be withdrawn and returned to its sheath, if there are witnesses near to convey the message to the chief whose aid has been invoked.

This custom must have a remote origin; for though but the semblance remains, the reality of its meaning, and the testimony of its truth, is found in Joel ii. 32: "Whosover shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered". David, who for a time lived in the lawless manner of a wilderness people, when he had taken to the hills of the south country of Judea with the malcontents of the land, was ever in danger. But his heart was fixed in faith on the Supreme Ruler of all nations, to Whom he turned for deliverance from his enemies. He knew both the customs of desert warfare, and the power of God. In 2 Samuel xxii. 4 we find the expression of his feelings. He says, "I will call on the Lord . . . so shall I be saved from mine enemies". The Psalmist sings (Ps. xx. 1, 7): "The name of the God of Jacob defend thee. . . . Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." In Proverbs xviii. 10, we find: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe". The name of God is the revelation of His character, and all that it implies. Innumerable references in Old Testament history confirm the belief of His people in their faith in His power of protection, and those who lived in troublous times continually resorted to Him in this manner, by calling on His Name, and the experience of past mercy has again and again caused them to trust Him.

By a similar faith the nomad of the desert has learned to look for help to the chief whose name is honoured in the wilderness, because of the reputation he bears amongst the people. If the suppliants' call ("*Ana dakheel Sheikh,*" etc.) is unheeded, and he falls a corpse at the feet of the avenger, it is the duty which will not be disregarded by those who honour his name, and are witnesses of the deed, to carry the tidings to the chief, and his reputation will compel him to keep his name untarnished by immediately taking steps to vindicate his honour, and execute the man who dared to touch his protégé, and take his name in vain, by setting it at nought, and depriving it of its true character. "It is God that avengeth me," says David (2 Sam. xxii. 48). "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain" (Ex. xx. 7).

I once met a peasant on the hills of Gilead, in the neighbourhood of Um Keis (Gadara), who carried a white flag at the end of a spear. As he was passing me on the road, he said, after I had saluted him, "This is the honour of the great Sheikh of the Wulid Ali, Mohammed es Smeir," and I showed my respect by a graceful salute. Some time before, the man informed me, he had cause to leave his village and flee to the Bedawin, through slaying his neighbour in a quarrel. The brother of the murdered man followed, and overtook him in the district of the Wulid Ali where the name of its chief was synonymous with his power. Before he could take vengeance the man-slayer had sufficient presence of mind to cry, "Ana dakheel Mohammed es Smeir," and as witnesses were near he was saved. The name of the Sheikh of the Wulid Ali

was his refuge. He took up his abode in the land where the name of his deliverer was held in great esteem and where he might dwell in safety under its protection. It remained for him to honour that great name, and make known the power of its salvation, by carrying through the length and breadth of the land a signal witness of the truth.

The Psalmist, remembering the power of the Most High God and His great deliverance, sings: "We will rejoice in Thy salvation, in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions" (Psalms xx. 5).

If the man had been killed after calling on the name of the chief, a black flag would have been carried to the sheikh as a sign that his name had been held in derision, and treated as a vain thing of no reputation.

Some years ago degenerate Bedawin of the hill country south-east of Jerusalem, the Diasy and Sahwâry, whose residence on the west of the river Jordan and the cultivation of their land had lost them the favour of nomad people, and caused them to forget their ancient history, quarrelled and fought. An appeal was made by mutual friends to a very important and influential citizen of Jerusalem, and an armistice was arranged for six months to enable him to examine the matter of their dispute.

Before the time had expired the Sahwâry attacked Abou Dîs, the home of the Diasy. The chief of the offended tribe therefore carried a black flag on a spear to the Holy City, to show that the honour of its citizen, the arbitrator, had been taken in vain, and treated with contempt. His decision was consequently made in favour of the Diasy, and included an indemnity of

WOMEN OF THE TOWN AND TENT IN THE JORDAN VALLEY.

33,333 piastres and 33 paras (about £245), the price of a life, to pay for the broken faith of the Sahwâry. It was eventually reduced but payment was made.

(3) *Jael and Sisera.*

A very plausible explanation has been offered for the exoneration of Jael, who killed Sisera, by asserting, without any warrant whatever, that the fugitive must have forced his way into the women's apartment, and thereby have placed the honour of Jael in jeopardy: and in order that she might maintain an unsullied reputation she murdered him. A perusal of the chapter on marriage ought to quickly dispel this false idea of woman's honour.

It was quite unnecessary for Sisera to desire any other shelter than the tent of Heber the Kenite; any tent would have been sufficient under ordinary circumstances, and it is the woman's duty to entertain strangers in the absence of her husband. Sisera would be safe from his pursuers even if they overtook him at the entrance, unless the owner had not sufficient power to protect him. Besides the Bible says, "she covered him with a mantle" (Judges iv. 18). He would therefore be out of the sight of his enemies, if they had looked into the tents in the pursuit of their foe, a proceeding which would have been regarded as an act of war, and would have been fraught with serious consequences to the attacking party if the Kenites had been strong enough to avenge the raid on their camp. Sisera evidently expected his enemies, as he said to Jael, "Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No" (Judges iv. 20).

He felt insecure in his retreat doubtless because the man with whom he sought shelter was too feeble to offer resistance to the Israelites, and maintain the cause of his guest and the honour of his name.

We must look for an explanation of Jael's act and Deborah's blessing to the Word of God. Exceptional circumstances are required to account for the murder of a guest. They have occurred at different times; once I remember in Moab a Beni Sakhr was slain by his host while at-supper, on hearing that a relation had perished by the sword of another tribesman. There must be an extraordinary reason for the violation of the law of hospitality. A man will often maintain inviolable the sanctity of the guest tent when it is opposed to his own interests unless compelled to act in extremity.

Jael's murderous deed forcibly illustrates the lawless character of the age in which she lived, and should not be judged without due consideration of the principles involved in openly accepting the supremacy of God and consequent hostility to His enemies. It is inexplicable to many devout people how so foul a stain could be wiped away in the religious fervour of an inspired prophetess of Israel. The blessing of Jael must be taken with the context. It must not be removed from the cursing of Meroz. The two stand together.

The men of Meroz were God's chosen people. He was their Sovereign and Ruler, and they should have been found in battle against His enemies (Judges v. 23).

Jael was a heathen woman belonging to a barbarous race amongst whom life was of little value and deeds of blood of common occurrence. Her dark mind had at last been illuminated, dimly perhaps, as might be expected in a dark age, and more especially in a woman

of a wilderness tribe. But the dawn of faith had appeared as it is made manifest in the heart of man to-day. God reveals Himself gradually, first declaring His existence, then showing His power. Jael's idea of God was imperfect, but she had a keen sense of the conflict constantly going on between good and evil, between God and His enemies. A war was being waged between Israel, the people of God, and a nation which threatened to destroy Israel. The enemies of Israel were the enemies of Israel's God; He was thus identified with His people. The cause was not simply the existence of Israel as a nation, but that of Divine truth and righteousness.

Great heathen thinkers and writers in all ages have acknowledged the need of superior direction, and have said that none can do without God, confessing their ignorance of Him while they considered their need of Him. Men and women superior in intelligence to Jael have been awakened by their self-examination to desire a nobler ideal of life, but no adequate response has appeared from within, in answer to their mute appeal for illumination. Many now, in and out of the wilderness, do not deny the existence of God, although they live without Him. They believe He exists in some indefinable way which they do not profess to understand, but He is no more to them than if He did not exist at all. Sometimes in trouble and perplexity, they feel after Him, stretching out a hand as if they seize something tangible, which eludes the grasp. Their eyes search the darkness for some guiding light, but an impenetrable mystery lies before them, and they fall back with a sigh as if all their endeavour had been spent in a hopeless quest.

Yet this seeking is a testimony of need, a fact which provokes inquiry, and finally acknowledges the existence of an infinite and eternal energy capable of ministering to their great necessity. God has so constituted man, that when he adopts an attitude of seeking, feeling after Him, if haply he might find Him, God is not far off (Acts xvii. 27). Light appears in the darkness of the heathen soul. The world has never been wholly given over to the unchallenged reign of darkness. Ever since the beginning of creation, since God said "Let there be light" (Gen. i. 3), there have always been souls wherein the light has been kindled, and through whom it has shot its rays into the world's gloom. The "Light of Ages," something better and brighter than man's natural existence, has illumined the minds of men and women in all times and all places. Wherever a witness to truth and justice has appeared there has been Divine illumination.

The children of Israel as a people were the witnesses of the everlasting truth and righteousness of God. They were sustained throughout their history by the conviction of their special and sacred calling as His witnesses, His light to the Gentiles; this light appeared in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not. At times the light grew dim, because so few of the people served their God, but the awakening came, and brighter grew the flame of God's Presence. Jael saw and responded to an influence that lifted her above her surroundings, "the women of the tent".

Abraham in that distant land which he left at the call of God, was merely obeying the same indefinable impulse that moved Ruth the Moabitess, and the wife of Heber the Kenite, which caused him to abandon his

early home and seek a new country. The way was dark and mysterious. Before him lay the desert, but there came a light for guidance: to him it was clear and plain while to others invisible.

Seeing the light, the consciousness of illumination, is always a moving forth from the old paths, a giving up of the old life, a renouncing of old ties, a casting aside of old customs. It may be to enter on a new career, a new life, by an act of faith, where difficulties appear almost insurmountable, and sorrows inexpressible, but the brave never shrink, they never walk in darkness. And no heathen soul ever escaped from its prison-house by following the gleam that shone through the bars without finding joy as well as sorrow, something altogether lovely in the region beyond the cell.

The upward path has been difficult at first, old traditions are not easily abandoned, and Jael's act would probably cause a certain amount of perturbation in the camp. We have no record of her subsequent career, we do not know what followed the act which received so great a reward. It is enough for us to know that once in the dark ages of Israelitish history a woman of the wilderness rose above her surroundings, the conventionalities of her situation, the usages of her people, and espoused the cause of God. Sisera, in the light of her new understanding, was not merely a fugitive seeking safety in her husband's tent, but an enemy of God. If he survived, his hostility to God would continue. For God and right then she takes the nail and hammer and slays the wicked who fight against God. The stern principle of justice with its limitation of view to the present life leaves no other way open for the woman whose newfound faith had impelled her to adopt the cause of Israel.

It was a barbarous deed in a barbarous age. We deplore its execution because we live in an enlightened dispensation, when the sun of righteousness has almost reached its zenith, and cannot comprehend the early dawn of religious influence. But it lifts the heathen woman above her people, it places her in a position of eminence that carries with it a zeal for God's cause which should be displayed by all who take their stand on the Lord's side. She acted up to the knowledge she possessed, hesitating no longer when the opportunity occurred for her to do her duty. And Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite is blessed above "women in the tent," because "she did what she could" (*cf.* St Matt. xxvi. 7-14); while Meroz, the men of Meroz, who knew the Lord's will and did it not, remain accursed (Judges v.).

The dispensation of the Old Testament was inferior to the new. Modes of thought and action were permitted in the progress of revelation, and the gradual development of religious faith, that are explicitly condemned in the Gospel. Passionate prayers for vengeance that interrupt the flow of spiritual meditations in the Old Testament are often a feeling after Divine government of the world, and spring ultimately from a zeal for God's cause. In the wilderness life there remains the passion, and the spirit of revenge, but there is not found the light which spreads its beams through the process of redemption, as the revelation of the will of God grew in the hearts of His people.

In hatred as well as in love the man who fears God must be wholly on His side, hatred of evil in its opposition to good. We have learned under the dispensation of the Spirit, in this age of advanced civilisation, to distinguish between the sinner and the sin: but of old

as in the wilderness life to-day, the two were identical, and it was necessary in compassing the death of one to destroy the other.

(4) *Blood Sprinkling.*

The saying of old time "a life for a life" has another feature in the mind of the nomad; it takes the form of a sacrifice. He believes in the shedding of blood as an offering made to Allah. If he is ill he thinks that the death of his camel or a goat from his flock, if its blood is poured out for him, will be accepted for his own life, and that he will be restored to health (*cf.* Job ii. 4: "And Satan answered the Lord, and said, skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life"). Thus in the earliest times was blood shed for the life of man. And from its institution the process of redemption continued through the ages, in tabernacle, and temple, in which it became more manifest until its final consummation when "The Life" was offered for the life, once for all, and man's redemption was complete. Associated with the idea of substitution is the offering of a goat at the birth of a child. In this custom may be traced the more ancient practice of human sacrifice. Until the time of Mohammed the Arabs buried their new-born daughters, as sacrifices to their idols. The cutting of the child's hair when its substitute is offered, is followed by a gift of the weight of the hair in silver to the poor religious mendicant who is often seen in the more settled parts of Arabia. This is a practice that may have been common in times past and may be compared with the reference to Absalom in 2 Samuel xiv. 26.

The Bedawin of the Farther East seldom eat other

meat than that which is offered in their sacrifices. It is eaten in fellowship by the tribe, and their guests, and though the dimness of their sight, and the prevailing sense of a natural need obscure the more sublime meaning, there is a sacramental side to their communion with one another in the lone wilderness of their transitory existence. The call for support and defence, which issued first from the nature of man to the unseen Power from whence it came, is a continual cry of the men in the desert, and the supply which is received they believe to be the gift of God for all, and in their eating one with another are thus in communication, through the food they partake, with the Being Whose guests they entertain and Whose food they eat (*cf.* St. Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

Blood sprinkling is an offering for their well being (*cf.* Exod. xii. 22). New land broken first for cultivation round an oasis in the desert is sprinkled with the blood of a goat offered as a sacrifice, the peace offering of the people (Lev. vii. 15). In building a house in the more settled parts of the Arabian desert the same custom is observed to ward off any accident.

A yearly visit to the particular saint admired by the family, generally one of their own ancestors, is an occasion for sprinkling blood by killing a goat on the gravestone as an offering. A repetition of this act occurs before starting on a long journey, and on the return after a protracted stay in some distant part of the country.

When the *ghrazzu* riders come home with booty, the women dance, tripping out of the camp with singing to meet them, and great joy fills the hearts of all the relations of the successful men. In the same evening

the live booty, which they say is sweet, is smeared with the blood of a victim.

All religious sacrifices are called *Kurbân*. And as evil spirits are recognised as a part of the economy of nature, propitiatory offerings are sometimes offered to the "*Jân*," then the nomad sacrifices to demons (*cf.* Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. cvi. 37; 1 Cor. x. 20; Rev. ix. 20).

CHAPTER V.

THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE WILDERNESS.

AN inquiry into the number and variety of the superstitions of the Bedawin would produce surprising results, but all efforts to trace them to an original cause through the people are fruitless. They exhibit no curiosity in any subject beyond the cares of their daily existence, and seem to have no idea of the beginning of the practices that have obtained a firm hold on their imagination, and entered into every department of their affairs. The main superstitions are common in every tribe of the nomad race: ancestor worship, the belief in evil spirits, the evil eye, charms, dreams, and omens.

1. ANCESTOR WORSHIP.

Every family has its own particular saint, generally one of its own ancestors whose manly virtues or feats of arms have been sufficiently conspicuous to merit special recognition. His grave will have been surrounded with a circle of stones, and on one side of it there will be a stone like an altar supported by two upright stones. Here the Arab makes his oblation, depositing a gift at every visit, when he kisses the stone and places his forehead on the altar. He does not think there is any difference between himself and his forbears and is convinced

of their interest in his welfare and that of all their descendants. At the tomb of the departed saint the whole family meet once a year, and spend at least two days in a festive manner in honour of their great relative. They fancy he will be pleased with the notice they take of him, and the more enjoyment they can obtain, the greater will be the pleasure he will derive from their visit. He was canonised by their fathers, who built his tomb, and laid the foundation of his reputation by the continual repetition of the story of his exploits or his virtues to succeeding generations.

A sheep or a goat is killed on the grave stone of his tomb; if the blood runs off the stone, the omen is bad, or if the camels tethered near it are restive at the sight of it, unlucky ventures are sure to follow. Future misfortune will not interfere with their present enjoyment when their dutiful respect has been paid to the holy man. A good meal dispels many terrors, and after the sacrifice follows the feast and entertainment. Their games and dances are not connected with religious or legendary ideas, they form the part of the programme of every feast. Horse racing and gun firing are their sports, and the form of dancing which they follow is the same in every place. The more active spirits among the men place themselves in a row with their hands on each others' shoulders, and move to and fro, while they chant in unison a line or a verse of a song. Sometimes a woman armed with a tent stave may occupy a position in front of them to give a little colour to the dance, and make it interesting, or a man with a sword will take her place.

The company near the tomb often numbers fifty and they never fail to thoroughly enjoy themselves. Fridays and Saturdays are the most propitious days for

their sacrifices, and considering the attention that is paid to their departed ancestor, and the offerings made for his intercession on their behalf, they consider they have not only a right to enjoy themselves, but to expect some good fortune to follow, which is an additional reason for making merry.

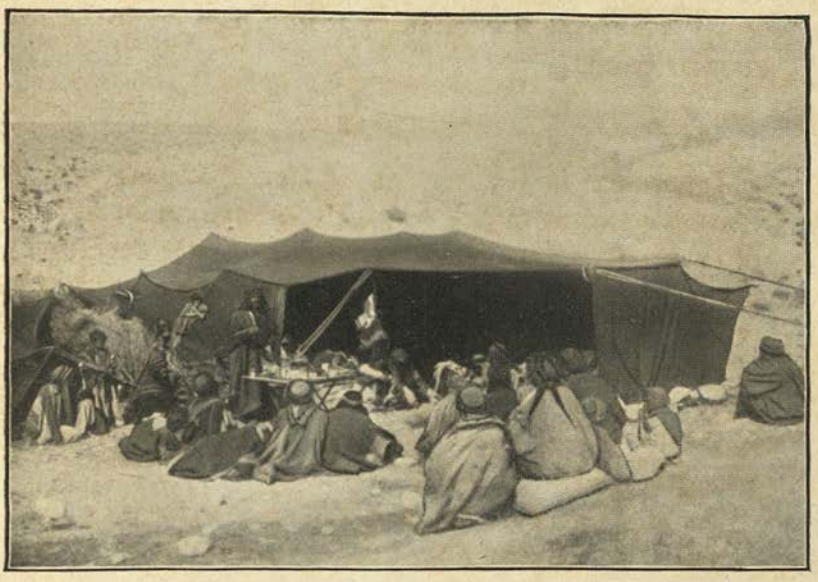
Besides the annual feast, they also sacrifice a goat to the saint, and invoke his protection and aid, before starting on a journey, and when any member of the family is ill. His tomb, or that of another "holy man," or a tree under which he is supposed to have rested, is the repository of all kinds of odds and ends within the power of a Bedawy to collect. Every one as he passes casts something on it, and as these tombs are invariably close to, or on the path, leading to a well, or some distant settlement, the heap of scattered articles grows to a considerable size. No special meaning is attached to this custom, it doubtless commenced with a desire to keep the place in memory, and has grown into a regular habit.

2. CHARMS.

Ignorance is the parent of many fancies and the nomad's vacant mind is a ready receptacle for all kinds of superstitious notions. He can be easily deceived by a stranger who has the appearance of a man of note, or whose fluent speech sets his imagination on fire. By simple things his child-like credulity is stimulated, if they are new to him, and are concerned in some way with the ills of the flesh, or connected with the great world he has never seen.

In a guest tent in Moab I met a Bedawy whose home was eighteen hours away to the East. He had

A SAINT'S TOMB WITH VOTIVE OFFERINGS.



A NATIVE CHRISTIAN FROM ES SALT PREACHING TO BEDAWIN.

ridden this long distance through a hostile country to fetch a quantity of Epsom salts from the Latin missionary. One of the company reminded him of a visit paid to his tribe by a predecessor of the head of the mission, and he confirmed with a doubtful smile the story related for my benefit. The enterprising priest on his tour roused in the nomad camp a great interest in one of his possessions, an ordinary, nickel-plated, collapsible drinking cup, that can be purchased in London for sixpence. When in use it is extended in a rigid position like a telescope, and can be filled to the brim; when empty the three parts may be pressed into one by closing one above the other; and then placed in a small case for the pocket.

The owner of this simple and useful travelling companion, when visiting the tribe of Bedawin in the desert, instead of drinking water from the lordly dish, of the kind presented by Jael to Sisera, which is seldom cleansed, produced his own vessel, with apparently no preconceived intention of either creating astonishment or exciting cupidity. No sooner had he opened and used it than it became the object of the keenest interest. Never before had the Bedawin seen a cup that could be opened and shut. Envious eyes watched his proceedings and their eagerness awakened in him a desire to impose on their credulity.

The simplicity evinced by their questions induced him to declare, amidst profound astonishment, that there was virtue in the cup, a healing property, which conveyed with the liquid it contained a sure preventative of fever. A natural desire to obtain possession was soon apparent, and hints were accordingly given that he might confer on the tribe an everlasting obligation.

But the traveller refused to accede to every request, nothing would induce him to part with so valuable an article. He saw however that it was necessary to repress their instinctive feeling of acquisition by the statement that, if it were stolen, the thief would, with every draught from the magic cup, imbibe the plague he wished to destroy. He then ostentatiously put it in his saddle-bag, while every onlooker carefully noted the place of its disappearance.

When he retired for the night and pretended to sleep, a Bedawy stole silently towards the cup and carried it into an adjoining tent, where preparations had been made for giving a drink to every man, woman, and child in the camp. The splashing of water, the confused murmurs of excitement at length ceased, and as quietly as it had been purloined the treasure was restored to the saddle-bag of its owner.

The mind of the desert inhabitant is open to the enchanting devices of professional magicians, or men who can engage the attention of the illiterate nomad until he is convinced of their superior knowledge. It can then be filled with comparative ease by the offer of some trifling thing to act as a charm.

A remedy for sickness is a verse from the Korân, written on a scrap of paper, and preserved in a leather case, to prevent any loss of its power to act. All kinds of charms are willingly purchased at a small cost, if they cannot be made at home and it is necessary to buy them, and the most potent are the inventions of itinerant medicine men, their novelty being their chief recommendation. Scribes engaged in this lucrative business are occasionally asked for a charm against a bullet. This takes at least a month to write. The paper on

which it is inscribed must be cut the length of the intended wearer and entirely covered with writing. Its efficacy is tested on an animal before it is delivered to the purchaser. If the beast on which it is tied escapes from the shot, the charm is shown to be in good working order, and can therefore be trusted, except when an adversary provides himself with a silver bullet, against which there is no known charm.

Love potions are bought by maidens interested in marriage; wives fearing the loss of their husbands' affection, seek the advice of certain "holy men" whose stock in trade is calculated to secure anything intangible, whether it is fresh young love or waning desire.

The abode of these enchanters is also the resort of persons bereft of some article or animal, which has suddenly disappeared, leaving no trace behind it. The most curious feature of the work is their reputation for a power commended by many stories of its successful use, that never seems to operate in favour of the present customer. It is really amazing how that reputation can be maintained. In the event of failure a certain amount of satisfaction seems to content the Bedawy, because he has heard of the successful issue of another case. Every one hears wonderful stories, and they serve as advertisements to stimulate the next applicant, who like the rest will leave in the hope that is always deferred.

One tale relates to a box containing coin lost by a man who lived near a settlement of well-known thieves. He sought the aid of a person who, rumour said, had the gift of second sight, gave an account of his loss and waited for news. A dish of water was placed before him and he was told to look into it, and describe what

he saw. At first there was nothing, but as he continued to gaze, a picture of the country round his dwelling gradually appeared on the surface of the water, and a man, accompanied by two women, was seen carrying off his property. Certain utterances unintelligible to the man looking into the water were supposed to cause the interesting picture to be revealed before him, and he was at once convinced of the magical influence of the holy man, who assured him the box could be regained. An additional payment was necessary, of course, to secure it; and the man naturally complied with the request without hesitation, under the sense of satisfaction already obtained.

The conjurer then proceeded to blow up a *kirby*, saying as he finished, "so will the perpetrators of the theft be filled with air to bursting". Soon after a man and two women came running in great agony to confess their fault, and beg for relief, as they restored the missing article to its owner.

Because it once happened by the word of a man who heard the story from another, it will convey to all who have not yet been disappointed sufficient inducement to try themselves when misfortune makes it necessary.

In wasting disease amulets are expected to allay pain and restore the sick person. Immunity from future suffering is obtained for children by a preparation of burnt scorpion and milk; this will make an infant proof against poison; and a feather from a long-eared, or eagle owl, chopped fine and swallowed in milk, will bring the poor little thing good fortune, if it is taken immediately after birth, before the child is put to its mother's breast.

A hollow stone tied round a young camel's neck at the time of its birth is a talisman that will safeguard

it for life, and keep it from harm and danger. Blue beads are used everywhere for children, and cattle, to counteract the baneful effects of the evil eye.

The failure of any charm will cause but a temporary discouragement, Allah is over all, and His will arranges the evil and the good for every man, and beast. But this comfortable doctrine never repels the nomad's desire to try again, and seek once more the use of things that might be good.

3. Dreams.

The belief in dreams, and their portent, is so strong that many Bedawin will shape the course of the day's duties by the directions indicated in a dream. If it has been very vivid they are moved with joy or fear, according to the good or ill fortune they believe will follow, and relate their account of it with the strictest accuracy, without the least regard for the effect it may have on the listeners. It will have so completely enthralled them, that the details, in which others may be concerned, are altogether subservient to the main issue which affects themselves. They cannot detach themselves from the subject, to look at it from another point of view, and consequently through the volubility of the dreamer those who help to complete the subject of his dream have sometimes just cause for displeasure; they may occupy a position of inferiority distinctly unpleasant, but a dream is a dream, and no feeling will alter it, nor the course of events flowing from it. The recital of Joseph's dream places him in an unfavourable light, but it is true to Oriental nature. A dreamer tells his dream with delight when he expects great things to issue from it, he tells it if the outlook is disastrous, without any hesitation

(Gen. xl. 9). Forewarned is forearmed, and all who hear of the part they are about to take through a dream have a chance to escape. A dream is a warning. Nothing would move a man to undertake a journey, if in a dream something happened on the way or anything in the dream indicated trouble; an accident in it means that something serious is sure to happen to some member of the family, a death perhaps, or a severe loss of cattle. All misfortunes are traced backward to some night vision, either forgotten, or the warning it contained neglected. If a man met another on the road, a very likely occurrence, and remembered that in his dream he met a man, he is delighted because it has proved to him that dreams are true.

4. Haunted Wells.

In the dry and arid land of the East where the summer begins far too early, and lingers beyond the desire of the people, the little rain is very precious, and its receptacles acquire a reputation, from association, or connection with some person, or event, that lends additional interest to the well, already the chief attraction of the district on account of its contents. Its importance is easily exaggerated, and stories quickly gather amongst the people who resort to it for refreshment. The name of the man who first gave the well to his people may be remembered with a grateful spirit, and the water in it regarded as sweeter far than any found in one of less esteem (*cf.* St. John iv. 12; 1. Chron. xi. 17). It may happen too that an accident has made a well notorious, and some are feared because they are supposed to be haunted: a deed of blood of unusual darkness has caused the restless spirit to hover round the well till

vengeance lays the "*mâred*," but none can tell by whose hand the victim was slain, and so the call of the blood cannot be appeased. None but the most hardened and sceptical nomad will venture out alone at night to pass that well. In his vivid imagination the spirit assumes a variety of shapes, and the story first related of the blood that was shed is embellished by his lurid dream of phantoms wild and furious, and so the tales continue to grow in number around the haunted place, and the credulous multitude repeat them, and believe them all to be true.

5. Evil Spirits, The "*Jan*".[1]

These evil spirits, embodied by the ideas of the people, who implicitly believe in their existence, are supposed to live underground in a domain as extensive as the place of man's earthly pilgrimage. They are supposed to be the subjects of a Sultan, who is dead, say the Fellaheen; but the Bedawin are not so easily beguiled, they believe he is alive and active, engaged in constant warfare with people of the earth. He is not the devil, "*ebliss*," or Satan, "*shaitan*," but a demon of less importance, but not the less notorious. The two former demons are seldom mentioned by the nomads, they appear to have concentrated their ideas of demonology on the *Jân* and their ruler. Night is the time for their nefarious practices; though small in size as would naturally be expected of people able to rise at any point, they are exceedingly ill-natured, and their strength is sufficient to enable them to carry off a man or a woman to their home beneath the earth. Happily they have rarely put their power to such a serious purpose as the

[1] See *Village Life in Palestine*, new ed., 1907, p. 215.

removal of man; women, so their husbands declare, have been taken away, though even these accidents have been few. The *Jân* prefer another method of dealing with the hareem. If a wife is particularly ill-tempered, and causes her husband much anxiety and trouble through her wilfulness, he believes she is in the power of the *Jân*; an evil spirit has entered into her, and a widow so disposed would be called a witch, and might through age and loneliness be regarded as "possessed," when she is only friendless, without a husband or a son, and none is able or willing to take her part. The treatment she receives excites her feelings, and she is only able to maintain her independence by her ill-temper; and the fear of her displeasure keeps her assailants within bounds. In an extremity they seek her advice and ask for her help, and thus her reputation is assisted by her willingness to aid till she may really believe that her matured experience of life, and her insight into character, are forms of a power of an unearthly kind, and she yields to the temptation to make that use of them which is suggested by the people who seek her abode, and divers arts and incantations follow (*cf.* 1 Sam. xxviii. 9-14).

Some men have said they have seen one of these evil spirits, and proceeded to describe it, first with details of the place where it was seen, to ensure acceptance of the story, and then the *Jân*, which was but a weird and exaggerated account of an old woman with hair like a horse's tail, a mouth a yard long, and teeth, though few, as long and as sharp as a sword.

One husband declared he had discovered a way of casting out the demon by firing a pistol over his wife's head; he said the *Jân* disliked the smell of sulphur; more likely the wife was afraid of the uncertainty of his

aim, and that subdued her passion and corrected her behaviour, it mattered less that her husband was convinced of an effectual remedy. It certainly had a good effect on other women, and that satisfied his fellow-tribesmen of the efficacy of his treatment.

The *Jân* can take any shape they please, a stone over which a man might stumble, or any article that would cause an injury. Every accident is ascribed to the *Jân*, every death has already been intimated in a dream; there is nothing in nomad life that is not subject to some external influence of evil, which the Bedawin dread.

6. The Evil Eye.[1]

Both in ancient and modern times the belief that some persons have the power of injuring others by looking upon them has been widely diffused. Both Greeks and Romans speak of it as specially dangerous to children and cattle. In the British Isles, also, the belief in the power of the evil eye is of ancient date, and is still found in remote parts of Ireland, and the Highlands of Scotland. Even amongst the country people in England, a form of it, somewhat similar to that of the East, is prevalent. I have noticed many times after a trifling accident, the owner of the article injured laughingly remark, "I praised it too soon". When a sick person has recovered, and the answer to the inquiry about his health is given with apparent pleasure, it has been followed by a kind of fear lest it might not prove to be true, and I have known cases where the remark has been made "as soon as I say all is well, I find something wrong". In Oriental lands if

[1] See *Village Life in Palestine*, new ed., 1907, p. 213.

a man praises any living thing disaster is expected to follow. Should a man pat a child's head and express his admiration, the mother or nurse will immediately take it home, gather the dust from the four corners of a room, put it on a pan over a fire, and cry, after warming and distributing it: "Fie upon thee, evil eye". Precise terms are never used respecting grown-up persons or children, and their looks and health, but "Mashallah," "Lo! What hath God made," or "May God encompass thee," or some general statement which conveys all the compliments necessary for the occasion without endangering the object before them.

The universality of this superstition goes far to prove that it has what may be called a natural origin; and when we consider that the eye is the most expressive organ of the soul or mind of man, that through it is shot forth, as it were, into the visible world of the senses, the hidden passions and desires of our nature, we need not wonder that in those early ages when men could give no account of physiological actions, and nothing was known of man's rational being, that the eye should have been superstitiously imagined to be the central agency of malignant influence.

The eye is as potent to ignorant people, whose minds are full of fanciful interpretations of natural laws, as superstition may conceive; the error arises from a lack of understanding of its operation, rather than a recognition of its power. The person who felt himself under the spell of a lustrous eye, with a penetrating gaze, would be too agitated to calmly consider the cause of his terror, and attribute to another, results for which he himself was mainly responsible. The uncommon colour of an Eastern eye might enhance this feeling, and cause the

victim to regard it as the means of conveying a malevolent power. Hence the fact that blue eyes amongst the inhabitants of Palestine and the surrounding countries have always been responsible for consequences disastrous to those who have been subject to their gaze. It is really the man who is smitten with terror that gives to the eye of his fellow-tribesman its baneful influence, and he fears less the force of character behind it than the fancies with which his own timidity have invested it. Enlightened understanding brings a clearer vision of truth, and a greater strength to the will for the dispersion of those foolish superstitious fears that help to make life intolerable.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RELIGION OF THE WILDERNESS.

THE nomad's feelings are strong within him, and the sight of the poverty of the land in his limited horizon, so full of dangers, so empty of substance, naturally causes him to yield to an inclination to look above him. His conception of fate springs irresistibly from his consciousness of the transcending greatness of what is outside his own feeble existence. He believes in an arbitrary and inexorable law proceeding from an objective Power that encloses and moulds his own subjective activity. The vast expanse of heaven with which he is so familiar, and the extensive landscape over which he travels, is the boundless empire of the supreme Ruler of man's destiny. He is impressed with the awful majesty of the Being who wills all things, and he accepts the ills of life with a marvellous resignation as being according to His dispensation. So overwhelming is the sense of the power of the Almighty that there seems to be no room left for the will of man. The principle of "Islam," the surrender to a higher will, is thus shorn of its grandeur by the absence of the consciousness of possession of a will to submit to the control of a superior being. His natural feelings therefore act without restraint, free to exercise their passion in whatever direction it may be impelled. Of God's existence the Bedawin have no

doubt, of His attributes they possess no knowledge, beyond the blurred traditions of their race. The God of the Ishmaelite is undoubtedly the true God, but his conception of Him is not according to the Christian's knowledge of His revelation; His true character is misunderstood because it has been misinterpreted. The nomads believe that Allah is merciful, on His indulgence they habitually rely. In this idea they comprehend as much as their dim understanding will allow the difference between His treatment of them, and men's methods of dealing with one another. We object to the Mohammedan idea of God, to the exaltation of His omnipotence above all other attributes until they are almost lost, we deplore the lowering of His character for holiness so that it appears to be no higher than that of a good man. We refuse to accept, and not from selfish interest, the limitation of God's goodness to Moslems. But more than all else we object to the Moslem's denial of the necessity for any atonement for sin.

The Bedawin are not troubled by any of these reflections, they know what they have instinctively learnt in the camp; and the little knowledge they possess of the religion they profess is the highest conception to which their mind can attain. The study of comparative religions is not a part of their life, it is enough for them that their ancestors were persuaded by the enthusiasm of Mohammed to relinquish a few old pagan customs, and express a belief in one spiritual God, and in a future life of happiness or woe, although the unity of the Godhead was not a new idea, but one already accepted in the East.

It must be remembered that Mohammed retains in

his teaching the duty of retaliation, as second only to almsgiving which is not practised by the Bedawin, whose hospitality is superior to the customs of the townspeople who follow this precept of their Faith. He commands his followers to punish thieves, even if they are women, by striking off the hand. These and similar injunctions show that it was not through weakness that he incorporated into his system rites which he was powerless to abandon, but because he was unable to break through the conditions imposed upon him by his birth, his education and his surroundings. His whole teaching bears the strongest impress of the Arab mind. It shows that he was "a barbarian who conceived murder and mutilation to be religious duties—he was unable entirely to shake himself free from the beliefs in which, as a son of the Koreish who guarded the Kaaba, he had been brought up in the very centre of Arab adoration. Muhammad gloried in the epithet of 'unread,' and perhaps insisted upon his own ignorance in order to guard himself from the suspicion, which his enemies carefully fomented, that he had read and borrowed from the books of Jews, Christians and Magians. It is impossible to read the Korân without perceiving that its legends are based on oral tradition and not on books. The Suras were written, it is said, on palm leaves and tablets, but when they were first collected, after the Prophet's death many were taken down from the 'minds of men,' and who shall say what additions were made to the Canon revised by Othman twenty years after Muhammad had ceased to speak? Although Cufic was not unknown in Medina, it was Othman, or Zeid. and not Muhammad, who wrote down the inspired

songs, and the boast of the Prophet, that he was, like most of his fellows, 'unread,' becomes the basis of a just condemnation of Islam as a religion of the uncivilised."[1]

The Mohammedan faith is comfortable to the nature of the people amongst whom it sprang, because it has no appreciable effect on conduct, but rather encourages than controls the passions which are found so plainly marked in all the offspring of the wilderness, and so the nomad remains without any incentive to live above his surroundings, and rise above the moral standard of past ages. The practical result of its fatalistic teaching, which has filtered through the desert from its source, is to bring down the individual and national life into very narrow limits, the mere round of duties required by custom. Everything with the Moslem is as it were cast in a mould made in eternity, which determines the form of all things, so that the idea of improvement or development is impossible.

Where European thought has modified the ideas of scholarly men of other Mohammedan countries, and the moral law of an enlightened age has exercised its power in public opinion, Moslems would have us believe there is something meritorious in their religion, and purity and beauty in their creed. But the mildness and simplicity and good faith in things indifferent to daily life, cannot make amends for the barbarous cruelty in the institution of a religion by the sword, of a people who have never been slow to shed blood, and continue to live without those moral principles which alone exalt a nation.

Doughty, who has studied Arab character more per-

[1] *Heth and Moab*, p. 388.

haps than any man, says: "These Ishmaelites have a natural musing conscience of good and evil, more than other men; but none observe them less in their dealings with mankind".[1]

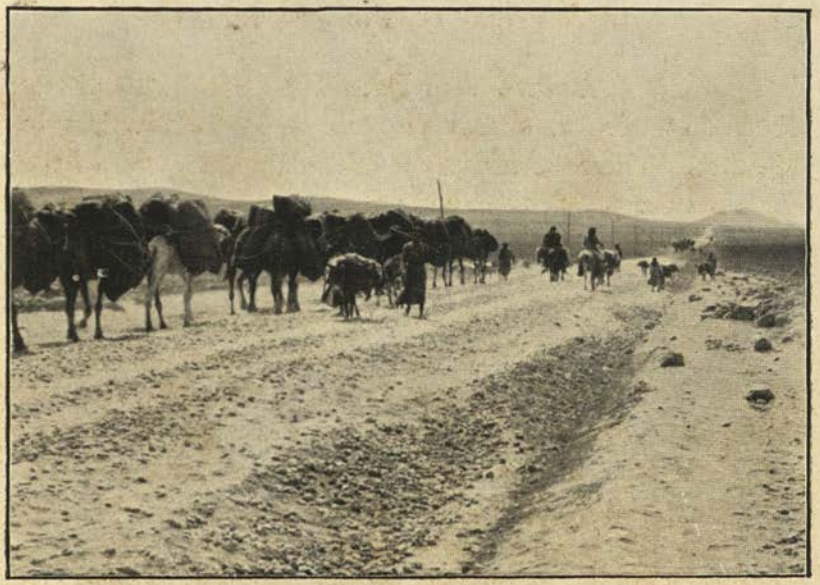
Throughout their life there is the voice of religion; they say with a monotonous iteration: "God give thee peace," and there is no peace. Allah, a name constantly on their lips, is lightly used in the most thoughtless manner. Their conversation is interspersed with appeals to God, and certain ideas of His intervention in human affairs cause them to believe everything has been arranged for them by His will. Adverse circumstances, a failure in any venture, may create a feeling of despondency, but they never rouse a man into blasphemous speech against the Being whom they believe to be responsible for their loss. A rebel against God should be smitten with death, and this persuasion of their mind accounts for their attitude towards all who do not accept their creed, and the resentment they display towards those whom they believe to be despisers of their faith. Yet they confirm every light and laughing word with cheerful oaths, in which the name of Allah is always found, and they live for the gratification of every human passion. The land is defiled by their iniquity as it was in the days of old, and their disposition to evil shows itself in the same unnatural offences, which the people of old were commanded to put away, and purge the land from guilt by stoning the offender (Lev. xviii. 23, 24, 25). In the wilderness this law is abortive, a mockery of the people; the older men with groans and curses acknowledge the prevalence with which it is broken, but no attempt is made to right the wrong; after their vigorous

[1] *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, p. 264, vol. i.

speech, they lapse into the usual frame of mind that leaves everything to Allah.

They have no teachers of religion dwelling amongst them; none to tell them even how to say the Moslem prayers; none to show them a better way of life, or lead them into a purer moral atmosphere of thought and act. In Arabia, the cradle of Islam, all Bedawin are more or less religious, though prayers are formal. To their limited understanding of worship, prayer is the repetition of a form of words with a certain artificial fervour, in an attitude of reverence, which instinct has taught them to adopt and example to copy, after their hands have been washed in water or sand. Religion in this race is very much like the "blood of passion," heat without use, feeling without fear, an uncontrollable fanaticism that is roused by disagreement and void of all charity. Law is necessary to keep this temper of mind in subjection, and restrain its disposition toward evil practices; but they know no law; nothing but the will of Allah which interferes not with the wilfulness of man. The Mosaic Code, so eminently suitable to the nature and temperament of the people of the East, is not within the area of their knowledge, and no substitute has exercised its influence for the good of the nomad race. The fearful result of Moslem fanaticism is less visible in the tribes of the Hauran and Syrian desert, it is more in evidence amongst the devoted adherents of the False Prophet, who live in and near the home of his youth, and others who seek in the annual pilgrimage to Mecca an easy way to the pleasures of a paradise that fills their corrupt imagination with carnal delights, and obtains for them a licence to live as they please. Since the death of Mohammed countless pilgrims have passed

along the desert route from Damascus to worship at the Kaaba at Mecca, and at the shrine of the Prophet in Medina. Their bones have whitened the sands of the deserts over which they have had to march; they have been plundered and slain by the Bedawin, who profess the same faith, unmoved either by their religious zeal or brave endurance; still the pilgrim way is trodden year after year by many weary feet. The pillage of the *hadj* caravan is only one more depredation of the Ishmaelite whereby he displays his ancient characteristics. It may in this case be associated with another feature, which accounts for his want of respect for this great institution, the sign of temporal power. This has been systematically resisted by the freeborn sons of the wilderness, who are not unwilling to profess the faith of Mohammed, but they refuse to acknowledge the temporal dominion with which it is always associated, and it may to a certain extent explain their indifference to the spiritual authority of the Sultan as Khalifa at Mecca. To preserve even a semblance of his power in Arabia, he has been compelled to despatch during the last ten years no fewer than two hundred thousand soldiers, the majority of whom have never returned. The essence of the Moslem system lies in the intimate association of political and spiritual dominion. Without this combination the faith of Islam would sink into obscurity. It is not the religion of civilisation, but the creed of a savage race. It is only original where it is negative, denying important dogmas which are essential to the welfare of humanity, and in their stead there is nothing worthy of acceptance that will minister to the growth of civilisation as it is being displayed in the brotherhood of man. It is even less admirable than



THE OLD ROAD THROUGH THE HAURAN.

A DESERT TRACK.

other religions of the Farther East, which inculcated in their teaching the duty of man's love to his fellow-man. A pious Moslem cannot without violating a direct command enter into any relationship with a Jew or Christian that is avoidable. He is forbidden in a positive manner to contract any friendship with unbelievers, with all who do not accept his creed. No one can seriously maintain that such a religion is the religion of the future, even if it were stripped of the barbarous fatalism of the wilderness.

The New Railway.

An undertaking has now been accomplished that is destined to have enormous influence upon the whole Mohammedan world, and the effect upon the Bedawin of the desert cannot at present be rightly estimated. A railway has been constructed through the wilderness from Damascus to Medina, *via* Ma'an, and will be continued to Mecca in the course of this year. It is an achievment of great magnitude that has, like all things connected with this country, escaped the observation of the Christian world. What motive inspired the Sultan to commence the work is more amazing than the impulse and energy that urged him to carry it through, and to all who are familiar with Oriental methods this is truly wonderful.

The opening of the railway was celebrated on 1st September, 1908, on the anniversary of the Sultan's accession. It was begun in 1901, and follows in the main the old pilgrim road to Mecca, the "*derb el hadj*," a distance of 1,100 miles from Damascus. Eight hundred and fifteen miles have been completed in seven years,

and there remains only 285 miles to carry the line from Medina to Mecca. The cost has been only £3,105,000, or less than £3,000 a mile, for this sum includes the cost of the material for the unfinished section from Medina to Mecca. The explanation of this small expenditure is to be found in the fact that the Sultan claimed all the land as his own, and the labour was supplied by his army. Four thousand bridges and numerous culverts have been constructed, as well as workshops at Damascus, Haifa, Ed Drah, Ma'an, Medina Saleh, and Medina. The workshop at Damascus covers an area of about 13,000 square yards, and is equipped for the making of locomotives. Three hospitals and three homes have also been built out of the funds, at Ed Drah, Tebouk, and Medina, and a school at Tebouk.

It is impossible to doubt that in creating this link between his temporal and spiritual capitals, the Sultan of Turkey has been moved by his ambition to revive and direct the religious authority, which he claims as Khalifa, or head of the world of Islam.

The new railway will be the chief factor in Pan Islamism, the bond that is to unite Moslems throughout the world, and concentrate their strength in the Ottoman ruler. It will also place Nejd, and the whole of Central Arabia in the strategic grip of the Sultan. No one can foretell what may be in store for the wilderness inhabitants, what changes may take place through the introduction of the new means of transport, and additional facilities for travel. All these things may accomplish what all the efforts of the past have failed to alter, and if the loss of personal authority implied by the new Parliamentary Constitution, recently obtained by a bloodless revolution, deprives the Sultan of some of his

spiritual power, the introduction of reforms through the development of liberal principles, may open the wilderness for Western ideas. If Christian people are prepared to take advantage of this unique opportunity, and the message of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is delivered in the desert, the Ishmaelites will see the light of truth, and it will be to them a strange revelation, different in its nature from all former movements, as the religion of love differs from the barbaric teaching of the sword and spear.

APPENDIX.

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS.

I. AN EASTERN TENT.

Man's Way to God.

THE following pages are intended to be suggestive of the symbolical character of the dwellings of the East, and may be amplified by the reader according to the consideration of the witness they bear of spiritual truth.

There is a Divine plan in human affairs which will be found to agree on general principles in the worship of God, the fellowship of man, and the life of the soul. It is presented in a most striking manner in the Old Testament, where it is first shown as a way of approach for man to God; and by an inverse process in the New Testament, to be also the way that God appears to man, as well as the new and living way of man to his Maker.

Its details were given to the Children of Israel when they were a wandering people dwelling in tents in the wilderness, without a settled home; when it was necessary for them to have an abiding faith, and a covenant relationship with God, who had miraculously delivered them from the bondage of Egypt by a way of salvation which He had appointed. He was their deliverer, He was their Chief: and they were of His fellowship,[1] and

[1] See p. 55.

were to be kept in that communion by a plan which would establish a way of approach that would ensure His direct control, and supply them with the power to enjoy it.

The transient nature of man's earthly pilgrimage is typified in the wilderness journey, in the dissatisfaction with present scenes, and a restless longing for an accomplished purpose. The weariness of earth is seen in the monotonous way, and the weakness of human nature in the ceaseless complaint. Man's great need is emphasised, need of body and need of soul, by his impotent will; it is supplied by an infinite power, in the manner most appropriate for place and people.

No subject in the Bible is treated so fully and in such detail as the Tabernacle and its furniture. It is described with a precision which is remarkable in the most remarkable book the world has ever seen. And when the symbolical character of the Tabernacle teaching is rightly understood, however men may differ about the precise meaning of particular types, and the lessons they are intended to convey, there is ample evidence of a Divine revelation which may be more accurately determined by the earnest seeker after truth in its ideal and spiritual form.

Man is led generally from some familiar object to gain a more sublime view of life; his outlook is elevated and extended in order that he may be induced to accept another meaning, than that which is presented to him by his first acquaintance with the object. God's revelation appears in this simple manner, leading man onward and upward to better things, from things of earth, to better ways in the ordinary walk of life.

The Tabernacle was a tent and enclosure (see p. 53), in the centre of the camp of the Beni Israel; an arrangement that might be found amongst other wandering

tribes. It consisted of an *outer court*, open to the sky, *inner court*, the first part of the tent, and *innermost court*, the secret dwelling-place of God.

The first court represents the condition of fellowship or communion, the second the form of communion, and the third the reality of communion.

On man's side this revelation of God's plan for him was based on his knowledge of life around him, of things belonging to a nomad people, but it was for the purpose of leading him into a better way, and a nobler fellowship. The details of course were necessary for imparting information and educating his mind, each of them has its significant features, but they are beyond the scope of this notice. Here it is only intended to show the general plan, thus:—

1. OUTER COURT—Condition of Communion.
   (1) The Altar—Redemption.
   (2) The Laver—Regeneration.
2. INNER COURT—Form of Communion.
   (1) Shewbread—Giving.
   (2) Candlestick—Living.
   (3) Altar of Incense—Praying.
3. INNERMOST COURT—Reality of Communion.
   (1) The Ark—Obedience.
   (2) The Mercy Seat—Power.

This plan was observed in the Temple in Jerusalem but its exclusive use is less noticeable than in the Tabernacle. There was a slight yet notable change from the old plan of the wilderness, which provided only for Israelites; still a middle wall of partition barred the way to the court where God's people assembled. The progression marked by this movement towards the Gentiles in admitting them to a particular part of the Temple Area did not interfere with the permanent arrangement

of the component parts, which otherwise harmonise with those of the Tabernacle. It shows, however, the mind of God towards mankind, and indicates His will in their direction which was followed by the sacrifice of Christ, whereby the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down, and the veil which separated priest and people from the Presence of God was rent in twain. Henceforth access to Him is free to all, by the new and living way which entirely accords with the symbolical arrangement of God's plan.

1. Condition of Communion—
   Redemption and Regeneration.
2. Form of Communion—
   Giving, Living, Praying.
3. Reality of Communion—
   Obedience and Power.

The form of the plan alone is necessary in the Christian church, as the old and new are one, and the Spiritual Church is built upon it, and for the purpose of assembly the edifice is fashioned like it.

1. OUTER COURT—
   Worship offered.
2. INNER COURT—
   Service rendered.
3. INNERMOST COURT—
   Communion received.

Spiritual worship is no longer veiled in the rudimentary teaching of symbolical objects, which are suited more to the sensitive than the intellectual nature, and like pictures please the fancy of children rather than improve their reason. Man naturally affects a carnal life and therefore affects a carnal worship, and would have a religion of the same nature. It was provided for him in the wilderness as all things were given him in

the most appropriate way, when the Law became the Schoolmaster to lead men from the elementary stage of their first ideas, to Christ the Head of all things. Most men have no mind to busy their reasonable faculties above the things of sense, they prefer the first stage, the Kindergarten, and are naturally unwilling to raise them to those things which are allied to the Spiritual nature of God; and therefore the more spiritual the ordinance, and the more averse is the heart of man to it. This accounts in a measure for the retention of an elaborate ceremonial in some of the churches of Christendom, which keeps the worshipper in a state of tutelage, even though the teacher may be able to look beyond the things of sense to the life Divine.

At the best material forms are but shadows, weak and ineffective, because they want the life, spirit, and activity of the substance. On the other hand the absence of all form destroys the definition and direction of the Divine plan. The three courts are useful for the purpose of order, but there is less need in this advanced stage of revelation of accessories to assist even the simple whose spiritual aspirations can better reach the end in view, when they are not impeded by objects that appeal directly to the senses. Ecclesiastical architects generally provide the three courts in an English Church.

1. Outer Court—the nave—worship.
2. Inner Court—the chancel—service.
3. Innermost Court—the sanctuary—communion.

These are still symbolical and representative.

II. An Eastern House.

Man's Way to God and God's Way to Man.

These are both illustrated by the fellowship of man, as it is seen in the East, where the house of an opulent

citizen is arranged with a regard for the performance of social duties as well as the necessary requirements of his household. In his dwelling the plan is more definitely shown than in a home in the desert. An Eastern house has more and greater facilities for putting the principles of hospitality into practice, being a permanent structure and available for various degrees of relationship. In this way it resembles more closely the Tabernacle than it was possible in a Bedawin camp.

A responsibility is attached to the position of a rich man which he recognises by a suitable adjustment of his affairs to the demands of all who have a claim upon him. It seems as if he stood in the centre of his family, with his face to the world, in an attitude of benevolence, his mind filled with a wide charity, and his heart moved with a great desire to promote the welfare of mankind. This outlook does not lessen the duty he owes to the members of his family, who are bound to him by a closer tie, but their identity before the world is lost in him, their representative and head, and to all outward appearance he is the only inmate of his dwelling, except the servants who wait upon his will, and attend his person. He sustains two relationships, one in the privacy of his hareem, and the other the public exercise of his influence.

The design of his house is prepared according to this disposition of mind, and the spirit of hospitality which is the predominant feature of Oriental life. Outside his home there is no indication of the means at his disposal, no element of display is seen in its external appearance, and the life within is an impenetrable mystery to all who are unacquainted with the personality of the owner.

Behind the door, set in the spare blank wall that flanks the street, there is the outer court "*koosh*"; at the end

of it, facing the door, a raised platform furnished for guests, the "*lewan*," the inner court; and above all and beyond all the innermost court for the intimate friends of the goodman of the house, the "*aleyeh*".

Morning and evening every day a long line of beggars wait at the door for the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table. There is no hope of admission for them except by the gracious condescension of the householder, who might in a fit of generosity call them inside to partake of his feast. He would then furnish them with suitable attire to enable them to sit at meat with his guests, or they would feel out of place and uncomfortable. Very necessary ablutions would have to be made before they could wear the new robe, and thus cleansed and clothed they could join the company gathered round the table.

The door opens direct from the street into a vestibule or porch, the porter's lodge, or straight into the courtyard, which is the first step to the knowledge that may be obtained of the interior by those who seek admission. When a feast is given on the *lewan* the door is left open and any one passing by may walk into the courtyard. An open door is itself an invitation (see Rev. iii. 8): Behold I have set before thee an open door.

The woman who was a sinner thus entered Simon the Pharisee's house when our Lord was invited to the feast.

When there is no feast the door is shut, it is not even opened during the entertainment of intimate friends, because they occupy the room which the public never see and never enter, the *aleyeh*. If a stranger arrives at the house, or a friend, he must stand at the door and knock, then wait until the porter has made inquiries from within: Who are you? What do you want? Where do you come from? etc. (*cf.* St. Matt. vii. 7; Rev. iii. 20; Acts xii. 13, 14).

If they are answered in a satisfactory manner the door is opened, and the visitor, ushered into the courtyard, and perhaps received on the *lewan*. On leaving the outer court to step on to the platform of the inner court, the shoes are removed as a mark of respect. Although the room (the *lewan*) is partially open to the courtyard, it is a distinct advance towards the well-faring of the householder, and occupies a more honourable position, both in the estimation of the people and the owner of the house. While any one may walk the outer court at supper time, who have any regard for the goodman of the house, none may approach the next apartment without a call. From this elevated position the giver of the feast surveys the company before him, to see if some modest friend or acquaintance remains amidst the throng, and he is invited "to come up higher".

This reception room is really the place of interview; the assembly in the courtyard is general, and many gather in it without the notice of the host. Here, on the *lewan*, Christ was feasted by Simon the Pharisee, and the woman who was a sinner remained below; and in this court He was questioned by the High Priest, and the disciple who denied his Master warmed his hands at a fire of coals in the outer court.

There is still another room, the guest chamber, reserved for those who belong to the inner circle of friends, where they meet in the calm and quiet of his home, away from the turmoil and bustle of the city's life, out of sight and sound of the people that throng its streets. It is the innermost court, the centre of the mysterious life of the man who has appeared to them in the threefold manner described by his abode—outer court for strangers or mere acquaintances, inner court for friends or important guests, and the innermost court for those whose hearts beat in sympathetic agreement with his own.

The demand made on the hospitality of the goodman, although varying in its nature and manifold in its character, has been met by an intelligence which shows that the response has not proved to be impossible. A delicacy of treatment is necessary to administer the right proportion of attention, and display a liberality which might satisfy all.

On the side of the recipient there is a feeling of regard which corresponds with the position he has attained in the estimation of the giver. It may be nothing more than admiration for his boundless wealth or the magnificence of his entertainment. The man that never gets beyond the courtyard has not been filled, he cannot occupy his mind with the enjoyment of participation; the sense of refreshment has been denied him, not by inadequate provision so much as his own attitude towards the entertainer. From the feelings of admiration and gratitude the real friend passes step by step to the presence chamber of the secret life, which commands his self-forgetful admiration, and devotion for the person and character of the host.

In this arrangement it is not difficult to see the way of approach of man to God as being in accord with the original plan. In a similar manner an Oriental house may furnish an illustration of God's approach to man through His Divine Son Who came to enter into his life and make him a new creature.

1. THE OUTER COURT—Condition of Communion.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man . . . open the door, I will come in to him."—Rev. iii. 20.

2. THE INNER COURT—Form of Communion.

"And Levi made him a great feast in his own house."—St. Luke v. 29.

3. THE INNERMOST COURT—Reality of Communion.

"The guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover . . . a large upper room furnished and prepared."—St. Mark xiv. 14, 15.

Jesus evidently knew this "goodman," his disposition, and his home, and regarded it as the most suitable place for the most notable feast of His life. A message is all that is required, the room is ready for the Master; that which is reserved for the favoured guest and intimate friend.

Sometimes the Lord Jesus knocks, and knocks again, before admission. Some men freely admit Him to the outer court as a mere acquaintance. It is a sign of respectability to have Him in the house, if it does not involve them in a frank recognition of His claim on their allegiance, or interfere with their intercourse with other people, and their more intimate relationship with the ordinary affairs of life. So long as He remains in the courtyard there is but slight fear of a disturbance of the routine of their daily occupation. It is a place for all.

Others are friendly disposed to Jesus without being friends, it pays to assume a certain friendliness, a personal knowledge of the great and good, and makes it worth their while to be able to disclaim their ignorance. It will depend in a measure on the circle in which they move. When a man veils his pleasure by a casual remark that he has the honour to know a famous man, he assumes a dignity in which he feels a certain amount of pride. If the magnate is only of local importance, or his fame restricted to a particular party, the discreet friend announces his friendship when it is likely to be appreciated. It can be resumed according to convenience, and discarded when no longer useful. Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to supper, he received Him in the inner chamber, he found Him a place at his

table; it suited his purpose, probably enhanced his reputation as a broad-minded man of liberal principles and generous disposition. But his manner disclosed an element of worldly wisdom and self-gratification, which deceived no one more than himself. Some men boldly say they have many acquaintances, but no friends. If it suits their taste or convenience to become more intimate with one than with another, there is a closer tie, but no real friendship. It costs something to be a friend.

In every man's house there is an *upper room*, the chamber of the soul, reserved for special guests, the secret thoughts and prevailing principles, the springs of action which direct the course of that man's life. The Master never intrudes; He sends messages, but He never enters without a welcome. When He has once been received, and He knows that the room is ready, He often comes again. He is in possession (St. Mark xiv. 15).

There is no absolute proof, but a reasonable probability that the Upper Room where the Lord's Supper was instituted was the subsequent meeting-place of the disciples. The power of association arising from the sense of attachment furnishes a moral support for this conclusion; while it may be insufficient to establish a fact, it is enough for the application of a principle.

On two successive Sabbaths the disciples were met together, the doors being shut, but the Master came to them in their perplexity with the word of Peace (St. John xx. 19). Again we find them on a subsequent occasion waiting for the fulfilment of the Master's promise, and there came to them His Spirit, the Spirit of Power (Acts ii. 2). And thus in the way of life when the Master takes possession, He brings Peace, and gives Power.

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